

Editorial Collective:

Chris Coleman, Sam Fleet,
Theo Haris

Other World Carfree Network Staff:

Tanja Eskola, Lucie Sancova

Graphic Design: Başak Çiğdem Çevrim, Sam Fleet and Theo Haris

Contributors:

Étienne von Bertrab, Giuseppe Caprarelli, Başak Çiğdem Çevrim, Paul DeMaio, Elitsa Grancharova, Jane Harding, Dmitry Kokorev, Jean McDougall, Sharon McKenzie, David Niddrie, Nate Padavick, Luis Patricio, Nathan Poetzsch, Tom Pratt, Ron Richings, John Robson, Anna Semlyen, Andy Singer, Kristen Steele, Streets are for People!, Titom, Luke Tymowski, Giselle Noceti Ammon Xavier, Rob Zverina.

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Carbusters, Krátká 26
100 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic
tel/fax: +(420) 274-810-849
editors@carbusters.org
www.carbusters.org

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10

Ferrara: Italy's City of Bicycles
An oasis of calm in car-centric Italy



12

Bike-Sharing Special
An in-depth look into the history of bike-sharing worldwide, the growing movement in US campus' and thoughts on transport and possession



19

Interview: Professor Hermann Knoflacher
The revolutionary Austrian thinker talks about his 'walkmobile' and why change is inevitable



22

Serious Bike Fun with the B:C:Clettes...
A look at Vancouver's sexiest Biker Collective



Regulars

- 4 Letters; Contributors
- 5 Announcements
- 6 Car Cult Review
- 8 Action!
- 15 Member Profile: Ciudad Para Todos
- 24 Studies and Reports; World News
- 25 Cutting Your Car-Use: Food
- 26 Media Club; Interview with Andy Singer
- 28 Resources

Features

- 10 Ferrara: Italy's City of Bicycles
- 12 The Bike-Sharing Phenomenon
 - The History of Bike-Sharing
 - The Bike-Share Boom
 - A World Possessed
- 16 World Carfree Day 2008
 - Worldwide Action Reports
- 18 The Financial Car Crash
- 19 Who's Crazy Now?
 - Interview: Hermann Knoflacher
- 22 The B:C:Clettes



Front Cover Artwork:
Nate Padavick
Front Cover Layout:
Başak Çiğdem Çevrim
Inside Cover Artwork:
Titom
Back Cover Artwork:
Nathan Poetzsch

Letters

Dear Carbusters,
I would love to get the bus to work. I live only 15 miles from my office, but because it is a small village the bus is not practical when time is important. As there is no direct service, getting the bus to work means a 15-minute walk to the bus stop, 1 hour and 20 minutes trip to the nearest big town (22 miles), another 30 minutes to the office



R. Zverina: Portland Bike Trap?

and then a 20 minute walk a total of 2 hours 25 minutes, and that is if the two buses synchronise. This means a journey of 5 hours or more which costs me £7.00 per day.

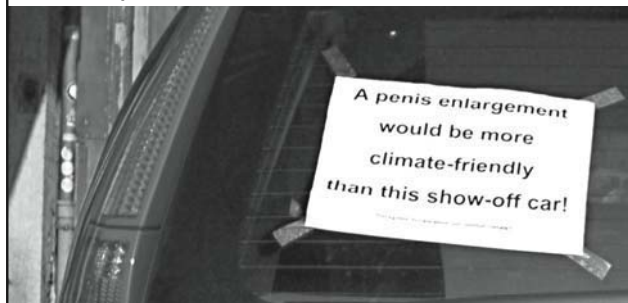
The car takes me 25 minutes from the front door to my desk and costs me £4.59 per day taking into account fuel (diesel), road tax, insurance, the cost of buying the car, depreciation and repairs.

The bus is the only form of public transport available to me, it is slower, dirtier and relatively more expensive than it was when I was a child. However, at the weekend I use the local busses for almost everything as I have my bus pass and I have plenty of time to get wherever I want to go to.

It makes me so cross when people say to use public transport to get to work as not all of us have the choice. Try to think of those of us who cannot easily get to work without our cars.

Jean McDougall

Via email: Spotted on the streets of Brussels



NO EXIT

© Andy Singer

THE AUTOMOTIVE BIAS OF LANGUAGE



Dear Carbusters,
I am so relieved to know that someone on this planet thinks like I do. I live in the suburbs of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Most people here either drive a car or want to. If they don't drive it's because they can't afford to or they are too young. It is very irresponsible for society and especially parents to encourage

children to pollute the planet. I agree with all the anti-smoking laws but find it hypocritical that there are no anti-driving laws. I was elated to hear the recent news about the Formula1 race being cancelled in Montreal this year but the mayor is trying to get it back...shame on him! Thank you for all that you do.

Tom Pratt

Contributors

Étienne von Bertrab is a professor, independent researcher and activist, with an MSc in Sustainable Development Planning (University College London). He teaches Political Ecology at ITESO University in Guadalajara, and operates a fair trade/organic café in town – a space for dialogue and promotion of citizen's initiatives. He is a founding member of *Ciudad para Todos*. Contact: etiennevon@hotmail.com

Giuseppe Caprarelli is a cycling advocate based in Rome, Italy, where, amongst other things, he

helps to coordinate the annual Intergalactic Critical Mass.

Paul DeMaio is a long-time proponent of bike-sharing and founder of MetroBike LLC – an organisation which consults on the creation of bike-sharing programmes and is based in Washington, DC For more information on international bike-sharing news, visit The Bike-sharing Blog at bike-sharing.blogspot.com.

Nate Padavick is an illustrator who currently lives in Columbus, Ohio and enjoys spending time in cities that actually have bike

lanes. He recently spent several weeks in Portland, Oregon creating 45 portraits of some of the darlings of the alternative transportation movement. These portraits can be seen on his website, www.studioss.com/pdx.html.

Nathan Poetzsch is wondering where he can find the nearest 'walkmobile' dealership.

Ron Richings is a cycling advocate in Vancouver, BC, Canada. He writes and Blogs for *MOMENTUM* magazine at www.momentumplanet.ca and posts advocacy info on

various email lists. Contact him at richings@telus.net if you want to receive his posts.

Andy Singer has been contributing to *Carbusters* for over 10 years (see page 26). He is the author of *CARTOONS*, and his work can be viewed at www.andysinger.com

Kristen Steele is a San Francisco-based writer and activist. She works for Thunderhead Alliance, the North American coalition of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organisations. www.thunderheadalliance.org

Announcements

Advertise in *Carbusters*!

Carbusters now provides space for advertising. What better way to invest your money than to display your products or services in a publication that reaches the entire world and provides its space for prices starting from US\$35. We will gladly accept and host ads from like-minded institutions, publications, businesses etc. Please find information about prices at www.worldcarfree.net/resources or e-mail editors@carbusters.org.

Christmas Resource Special

There will be a new set of resources available before Christmas, including a collection of new T-shirts from artists previously involved with *Carbusters* (see page 31). Pre-order from our KAGI site and we'll send them out as soon as they come back from the printers.

Donate to *Carbusters*

Carbusters is partially funded by subscribers, and partially from EU funding and the generosity of individuals. If you like what we do then help us continue our work by donating to the WCN at www.worldcarfree.net. Or, even

better, spread *Carbusters* around and get your friends to subscribe. Cheers!

Carbusters #37 Call for Submissions

As always, *Carbusters* welcomes all kinds of submissions from its readers and friends: articles, news and action items, photos, graphics, poems and anything that's carfree. We are also always on the lookout for inspired, enthusiastic and active individuals who are eager to make change happen. So, if you feel you're one of those (and why shouldn't you be) feel free to contact us with your ideas at editors@carbusters.org.

Deadline for submissions is January 15, 2009.

Resource Centre Changes

The World Carfree Network is currently undergoing a Resource Centre overhaul. While we are putting our imagination at work to come up with ideas that would satisfy the needs of our carfree members and friends, we would love to hear what you would like to see provided. If there's something particular you would like to give as a gift to a carfree

friend or purchase yourself, or if you have any imaginative ideas, please drop us a line at orders@worldcarfree.net.

Carbusters Radio Updated

The collection of carfree songs on *Carbusters* Radio www.carbusters.org/mp3/index.htm is expanding. If you are a talented carfree proponent who puts his/her passion for a better world in lyrics and melodies, you can send your song to editors@carbusters.org for inclusion. Don't forget also to check the updates of our Facebook fan pages for *Carbusters* and WCN. We're also launching a YouTube presence, so if you can think of related videos, please send a link to theo@worldcarfree.net.

WCN Membership

The WCN was created as an umbrella organisation that aims to provide services to its members, both organisation and individuals. We are always happy to hear from all of our members the various ways in which we can serve their needs and help them in their carfree agenda. Feel free to contact us at info@worldcarfree.net with any ideas, proposals, complaints, or just to say hi.

Featured Artist Interview

Nathan Poetzsch, whose artwork is featured on the back cover of this issue, answers a few questions about life and pigeons. To see more of his work visit his website: <http://poetzsch.net/>

Where are you from?

From God's own Promised Land. It lies among the Walmarts, betwixt the corn and soy.

Where did you learn to draw?

See previous answer; it was a way of coping with isolation.

Where do you get your inspiration?

Of late, from the interaction of biology and culture. In general, the obsessions of my youth.

What's your interest in sustainable transport?

Part of the great big American myth is the belief that car ownership = freedom. I was always uncomfortable with having my freedom depend on something requiring monthly payments, which breaks down and rusts.

Eco-hero of the day?

As I see it, the first thing to do is to get 6 billion people to believe that

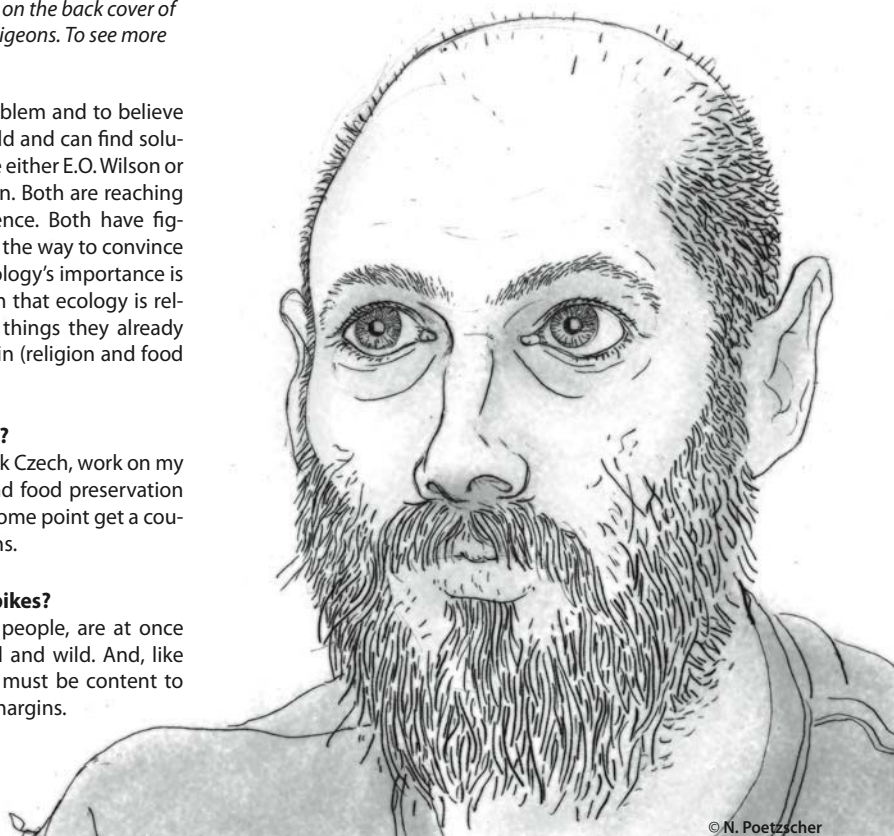
there is a problem and to believe that we should and can find solutions. So, I like either E.O. Wilson or Michael Pollan. Both are reaching a wide audience. Both have figured out that the way to convince people of ecology's importance is to show them that ecology is relevant to the things they already have a stake in (religion and food respectively).

Future plans?

Learn to speak Czech, work on my gardening and food preservation skills and at some point get a couple of chickens.

Pigeons on bikes?

Pigeons, like people, are at once domesticated and wild. And, like cyclists, they must be content to dwell in the margins.



Car Cult Review

Smerraris and Smamborhynis

Some nerdy pranksters have put flashy sports cars in their place by Photoshop-ing them down to 'Smart car' proportions. The creators of these child-sized Smerraris, Smamborhynis and other models sent their images to the auto media purporting them to be model kits. Though the whole stunt was a hoax, many car-loving bloggers favourably commented on them, calling them the sports cars of the future. If emission caps in the future are enforced, luxury and sports cars may have no choice but to shrink to midget proportions or disappear altogether. The producers of the meticulously touched-up images remain anonymous.

www.carandsuv.co.nz

Mushroom-Based Fuel Cells

In issue #35 we reported on bacteria excreting crude oil, but the quest to find a natural solution to our voracious appetite for scarce resources continues. Not even the mycological world is safe: Christopher Blanford, a chemist at Oxford, is working to replace the platinum and other rare metals needed in fuel cells with laccase, an enzyme secreted by fungi. For the chemical reactions in fuel cells to work, electrodes from rare metals such as platinum and zinc (due to run out globally in 30 years) are used. Recent research has shown that the enzyme laccase, from tree-rotting fungi, has an equal catalytic performance to plati-

num in fuel cells. A laccase enzyme-based fuel cell would have the equivalent endurance of 20 re-charges of a modern battery.

But it's not all smooth sailing: the mushroom must wait before being hoisted to saviour status for the car in a resource scarce world. The enzymes are simply too large to fit on a fuel-cell surface to work at useful currents. Scientists are currently sweating to break them down to one-thousandth their original size. John Loughhead, executive director of the UK Energy Research Centre, says "my gut feel is this is a possibility for the post-2020 world: discovery to deployment is historically around 20 years so I'd put my money on towards 2030 if it works." In the meantime, other alchemical formulas will have to be tried.

Guardian

Drunk Testing

A 20 year-old woman from Arad, Romania thought it would be a good idea to arrive to the written section of her driving test drunk. Monika Cristescu began giggling loudly and boasting to the other candidates that she was going to get every question correct. A suspicious officer approached her and after noticing the stink of alcohol on her, administered a breathalyzer test – which she promptly failed. The policeman withdrew her license application and banned her from taking the driving theory paper until she could show up sober. Ms. Cristescu admitted to downing "only four gins" beforehand to cope with nerves.

www.ananova.com

Drive-Through Voting

Car Cult struggles to keep up with a society that is always pushing the boundaries of what can be done in a car. America has a cradle-to-grave attitude towards cars: many are conceived in them, wedding vows can be made in them, vital food and prescriptions can be attained in them, and sadly, many die in them. Orange County in California is allowing another fundamental right be done in a car: vote. With voter registration up by 15% in the county this year, they are hoping the drive-through terminals using electronic voting will help lessen the crowds. "I know it is going to be busy as heck. We're preparing for heavy turnout," said the Orange County Registrar Neal Kelley.

Though this will be the first case where electronic voting takes place in a drive through, Sonoma County, California has been allowing drivers to drop off their paper ballots while seated in their cars for years. Riverside County, also in the Golden State, will be allowing voters to cast their ballot from a roving "votemobile" that is to meander the area on Election Day. Is this perhaps a measure to get more Republicans to vote?

Attack of the Highway Bees

A highway near Sacramento, California was closed for several hours after a flipped-over lorry released 12 million angry bees. The driver of the lorry carrying 400 beehives

containing 30,000 bees each was believed to be speeding. "People were being stung left and right. It was an ugly, ugly scene," said one police officer. The stunned bees were indiscriminate in the stinging of fire crews, tow truck drivers and police officers. It took the authorities seven hours to take control of the scene and return the bees to their hives. Bee handlers were taken to the scene – who used smoke to calm the bees. Bee handlers passing the scene also helped out as much as they could.

www.thatsweird.net

Prince Charles' Car Drinks Wine

Can they really think of nothing better to do with surplus wine than to turn it into biofuels? Prince Charles had the notion to run his 1970 Aston Martin D86 on it. The car that was a gift from his mother gets a paltry 4.5 kilometres to a litre of processed fermented grapes. The company producing the biofuel is Green Fuels, which also specialise in the engine conversion of luxury cars to be run on biofuels. His Jaguar is run on cooking oil.

Prince Charles is a strong proponent of biofuels, judging from his car fleet and his insistence to be the first passenger on the maiden voyage of a 100% biodiesel-fueled train on British soil. He also claims to be carbon neutral after spending US\$60,000 on carbon offsetting schemes last year to make up for his 86 overseas trips – that often involved private



flights. While we admire Charles' efforts, *Carbusters* would like to politely ask him to send the wine our way.

www.edmunds.com

The Face in the Car

We humans love to anthropomorphise all that's around us. Disney makes billions by giving human features to the faces of fish and elephants, and advertisers love to do the same to nature's creatures, from Chevron's Tiger to Taco Bell's talking Chihuahua. The same desire applies to cars, as Disney/Pixar's successful 2006 film *Cars* exemplifies. The study *Face to face: the perception of automotive designs* by an Austrian team of evolutionary psychologists, investigates how our perceptions of car designs corresponds to our perception of human faces.

Twenty men and 20 women rated 38 passenger car models that were on the market between 2004 and 2006. One-third of them saw a human face in at least 90% of the cars: eyes in the headlights, mouth in the grille, and a nose usually in the hood ornament. The participants preferred cars with the most "power" traits, including slit headlights similar to an evil glare and wider grilles corresponding to a big-mouth. With the help of evolutionary psychologists, the researchers linked the most popular car designs with human face characteristics of arrogance, fear and agreeability.

Who cannot see the intimidating grin of the Dodge Ram or

the sinister gaze of the Chrysler Sebring? The researchers intend in the future to study the response of Ethiopians who have little or no exposure to cars or the manic pace of Western culture. Who knows what facial features they will prefer, but if *Carbusters* could conduct the study we think they might take a liking to the wide smile of the bicycle.

Human Nature Journal

Policeman Victim of Road Rage

Peaceful Canada is apparently not immune from the wrath of road rage. Jozef Baksay, who saw a by-law police officer issuing his car a parking ticket, began scolding him, and then proceeded to extinguish his lit cigarette in his eye. Thankfully, the officer was able to close his eye in time to avoid injury. The 55-year old was taken to custody immediately afterwards and charged with assault with a weapon. "I've worked in central London where there are literally hundreds of parking attendants and I have never seen anything like this," said the assaulted officer Cpl. Fred Harding.

Though the term was only invented in the 80s, "road rage" is already considered a technical medical condition according to the US Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Behaviour exhibited by "road ragers" is the result of "intermittent explosive disorder", an impulse control disorder that is also linked to kleptomania and pathological gambling.

The Vancouver Sun



Card Game of Shame

Has the car crash become so common-place that people see them only as a nuisance? That seems to be the case in China where an old couple and a middle-aged woman were seen playing a casual game of cards 20 metres from a 20 vehicle pile-up that left three dead and two critically-injured in the Henan province. The journalist Zhao Xiaoli, who arrived at the scene, was shocked at the nonchalance of the card players: "It looked like they didn't know what was happening at all."

Their behaviour can't be blamed when accidents are so common. In China 470,000 are injured and 100,000 killed annually from car accidents – an inexcusable loss of precious life caused by careless drivers. The US witnessed nearly 43,000 deaths and 2.9 million injuries from car accidents in 2005. The European Union, with a population of 497 million, had 47,000 deaths in the same year...

current.com

Supersonic Bloodhound

The British team responsible for the previous land-speed record of 1,228 km/h – set in 1997 – is back in the driving seat. Not content with smashing the sound barrier, the team is set on outrunning the bullet. The Bloodhound SSC (SuperSonic Car) – essentially a 12.8 metre long, 6.4 tonne, jet-powered rocket – is expected to be ready to reach the 1,690 km/h (1,050 mph) target by 2011. With one of the latest EJ200 jet engines on loan from the British Ministry of Defence, the 'car' will be capable of accelerating from 0-1,690 km/h in just 40 seconds; putting all jackrabbits to shame.

The team responsible stresses the importance of the educational aspect of the project and intends to go around schools in the UK presenting it. The genesis of the idea came from the new British Science Minister, Lord Drayson. Faced with a shortage of up and coming educated engineers – and with many future projects requiring specialist know-how – Lord Drayson wants the project to act as inspiration for the next generation of schoolchildren, with school programmes aiming to include children during every stage of development.

With £10 million still to be raised, and serious doubts that the 'car' will meet the new EU fuel efficiency targets, the question remains: is this just boys with their toys or scientific inspiration?

Car Cult by Chris Coleman



Action!



© Luke Tymowski



© Bikevolution

Punks, Pianos and Hair Salons

Every September 22, *car-rupt* Toronto pays a local charity to make a carfree day. They close 150 metres of car traffic on Yonge Street for four hours to show how great freedom from cars is.

Streets are for People! again held parties on Queen Street, the cultural backbone of the city. Years ago the city hall promised to close it to cars for September 22. Of course when you live in a place full of artists and immigrants, rebels and patriots, and only 1952 old, rich, white, male @\$\$holes run things, fun is seldom allowed... so they cancelled this plan.

Meanwhile, a punk band played in a parking spot here; a local hair salon set up barber chairs and a waiting lounge in the road over there; a piano stuck in traffic was looking for a place to park. Trum-

pets, bikes, baby strollers, rickshaws and hundreds of people walked down Queen Street without a permit; tramways passed and cars kept away until we reached University Avenue where the intersection became blocked when the Critical Mass showed up. The police were upset, but we were already at Old City Hall when they caught up with us – they didn't stay mad very long.

They also know we live in a *de-mockery* and no matter how much we could be Barcelona, we choose to be *Destroit* instead. Our politicians will cheat us into thinking they care about the city, the planet and our bodies, while they subsidise the status quo of car culture. People of our city are held hostage by their inaction. Help us!

www.streetsareforpeople.org

Cycling for Clean Air in Sofia

Clean air is something to which we all have a right. But the bigger the city you live in, the worse the air you have to breathe. Are your only options then either to move to the country or stay in the city and forget about it?

Unfortunately, simply forgetting about the problem doesn't make it go away. Applying some of our brainpower to finding alternative solutions is a better option than sinking into apathy. That's what drives countless activists around the world, including Bulgaria, to promote the benefits of cycling.

This year's World Carfree Day events had the motto "Clean Air For All". On September 16, volunteers in Sofia worked to raise public awareness on how cycling benefits the environment. Bikevolution and Environmental Partnership

Bulgaria Foundation took a census of cyclists in Sofia. Volunteers stood at key points across the city throughout the day, in spite of rain and plummeting temperatures. They counted about 600 cyclists the whole day, with 62% of them riding on the city's bicycle lanes.

The bicycle competition and parade on September 22 had better luck with the weather. It was a sunny day, with about 20 children taking part in the competition at Kristal Garden in front of the Central Military Club. Later in the day, the bicycle parade, which started from Kristal and ended at NDK (National Palace of Culture), attracted about 100 cyclists and one bike rickshaw, which takes tourists around Sofia as an alternative to the ubiquitous yellow taxis.

By Elitsa Grancharova, Bikevolution



Photo NYC DOT

Ciclovía Hits NYC

Despite having an extremely negative record for its violent response to Critical Masses, New York City took a bold step this summer with the implementation of "Summer Streets" – a Ciclovía-like event that led to the closure of 11 km of roads to cars. For three Saturdays in August the streets were returned to the people from 7.00 am to 1.00 pm and the residents of the blaring metropolis

could find some peace and quiet in their concrete jungle.

The city organised loads of events – bike-sharing, yoga, dance and fitness classes featured prominently. After all, one of the event's aims is to help foster a healthier lifestyle and a more self-propelled future. But, even more, the programme sprang from the realisation that roads have been under car-dictatorship for far too



© Bicletada Curitiba

WCD in Moscow: Next Year...

Moscow officials paid no attention to World Carfree Day and Carfree Russia couldn't convince them to follow it. Neither MobilityWeek nor Carfree Day occurred in this city where 3.5 million cars are registered and traffic jams often block big parts of the city. This is why Carfree Russia concentrated mostly on campaigning and the dissemination of information. We tried to inspire drivers directly via the mass media. The message: "Leave Your Car At Home! Go By Foot, By Bike, Use Public Transport Instead!"

Carfree Russia held an unusual press conference in a tram travelling through Moscow's streets. Representatives from Carfree Russia, WWF and Moscovites for Trams gave speeches and distributed press packages. The

one important breakthrough this year was that the Moscow state transport company, Mosgortrans, joined this action. Its chief Petr Ivanov attended the event and made a press briefing. The only real street action – a Critical Mass – happened on Carfree Day. About 70 cyclists joined the ride and made one trip around Boulevard Ring in the centre of Moscow, resulting in widespread media coverage. A lot of TV channels, broadcast stations and newspapers said that Moscow celebrated World Carfree Day officially. This is of course not true, but it might just convince the government to make big changes in transport policy and make the city carfree next year. At least for one day!

By Dmitry Kokorev, www.carfree.org.ru

Curitiba's Carfree Month

We had a lot of ideas for Carfree Day in Curitiba. But it was impossible to promote a big event without municipal support to help spread the word, close streets, hire performers etc. We soon realised that we would have to do everything by ourselves, so we decided to make a Carfree Month full of small events instead of a Carfree Day with only a big one. The principle was simple: whoever came up with an idea would be responsible to execute it.

During the month we organised four street music shows and four open discussion groups with themes ranging from Ivan Illich's revolutionary ideas to the cyclists' situation in Brazil. We also organised activities such as a walk in the city's gardens, a photo exhibition entitled "Less Gasoline,

More Adrenaline", a bike tour to the city dump to raise awareness about garbage disposal and a Cycle Day featuring a festive bike ride through the city, filled with prizes and surprises, musical shows and a bike fair.

World Carfree Day itself started with a morning Park(ing). At noon, local sustainability groups planted flowers inside public garbage cans and painted bikes on the asphalt. A talk with mayoral candidates was later held to demand urgent measures to revert all the investments to motorised traffic. And finally we began our Bike March: 300 cyclists swept the streets of the city. The feeling of freedom and happiness was so intense that a few riders couldn't resist, and took off their clothes. bicicletadacuritiba.wordpress.com

long. The city's Department of Transportation commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan confirmed this by stating "the streets themselves are among the most valuable public space that the city has to offer, and finding the room within our existing street space for those on two feet or two wheels is a true application of our goals for a sustainable future".

Mayor Bloomberg had prom-

ised to expand the project if it was a success; preliminary evaluation indicates this is the case. Although some luxury stores did witness a fall in revenues, business boomed for most shops, evaporating any fears that the absence of cars would lead to economic disaster. For next year, more streets will be Summer Streets, and for longer.

www.nyc.gov/summerstreets

More action reports from World Carfree Day on page 16.



Ferrara

Italy's City of Bicycles By Giuseppe Caprarelli

Ferrara is a lively medieval city with a population of 133,000 in the Emilia-Romagna region of Northern Italy, with a rich art scene and a large student population. As if the glorious Este Castle – the city's symbol since 1385 – wasn't enough for civic pride, the city also boasts the highest bicycle rider-ship rate in the entire Mediterranean region, and a rich cycling history.

A Long Cycling Tradition

Though Ferrara is in many ways a typical Italian city, there is one very peculiar thing that has transformed it into an incredible and unusual experiment in this country of car-centred mobility: the bicycle. Not only are they present within the city in unprecedented numbers for the region – more than 30% of the population commutes by bike – but there is also a very active political scene in Ferrara, dedicated to promoting and improving bicycle use. The unique behaviour of local politicians, urban planners and activists that have facilitated the progress here has roots planted deep within the history, geography and social conditions of the area surrounding Ferrara.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Emilia-Romagna has been one of the most important areas of industrial and agricultural development in Italy, which resulted in very strong workers' unions. Most of these unions encouraged the bicycle not only as a means for the workers' daily commute, but also as a tool to improve their social conditions. The Red Bikes of Emilia-Romagna (see box) was a union that asked for a bicycle for every worker and woman to enhance their use of free time and increase their freedom of movement. During the Fascist period, and especially World War II, these movements

were declared illegal. But as every inhabitant of this region knows, no one can stop the progress of the bicycle, and after over two decades of repression the region witnessed a cycling renaissance.

New Times, New Methods

Unlike many other cities in Italy, where the centres are filled with cars and mopeds, Ferrara closed the city centre to any polluting mode of transport in the 60s. Real political steps were made from there to promote cycling in the city. Recent developments began in 1995 when local politicians started to realise that if bicycle use increased in the city, it could represent a reference and symbol for Ferrara and, more importantly, a cultural heritage that every citizen would be proud of. It is this concept that has granted Ferrara the title of "Human Patrimony" on behalf of UNESCO, and it is a concept that has been gradually evolving until it has become accepted by all members of the city: citizens, students, merchants and politicians.

In 1996, the Municipal Office of Bicycles was created, the only one in the nation for many years. It was clear to all members of the city that the only way to contrast the use of cars was to create an infrastructure capable of

physically encouraging the use of bicycles, and that important steps had to be made to raise the percentage of bicycle use for commuting, which was around 21% at that time. It was also necessary to counteract the powerful media-controlled image of the car with a taste of their own medicine: publicity. This meant promoting the key concept of community-building, represented through the bicycle, granted and used by everyone, regardless of social distinctions. This is why the slogan "Ferrara: City of Bicycles" was propagated everywhere: in shops, tourist offices, buses and even the little sugar bags in cafés and restaurants.

Also, the principal tools for infrastructural measures were made in 1996 by the *Biciplan* (see box), in which a set of measures were put forth indicating general steps for the development of cycling infrastructure. This included complementary actions to help bipedal propulsion such as cycle parks, public air pumps located in key points of the city, and dedicated street signals. Using the rare opportunity of financial support from the regional and national government, the *Biciplan* was adopted and completed in less than a decade.

Today, Ferrara has 80 km of cycle lanes and many other works are under way, including the securing of conflicting space between motorised traffic and bicycle commuters, and is now considered the Italian city of bicycles – after 10 years of hard work by local politicians and administrators to make the bicycle the best practice tool for urban transport.

Green Tourism

Green tourism is also one of the most important focuses of the municipality: in 1995 the municipality chose to introduce

Ferrara Central Train Station



The Biciplan of Ferrara

The *Biciplan* is an integrated policy framework intending to eliminate serious road accidents and obtain a sharp decrease in the number of injured or killed people in road accidents within the Ferrara County boundaries – by at least 4% yearly for the next three years. The program aims to provide a completely segregated network of cycle paths in the town and along the radial routes. This will improve safety for cyclists and make it easier for youths to travel to school alone by bicycle.

In conjunction, the municipality of Ferrara is implementing speed control and speed reduction measures. This will include new traffic lights to stop crossing traffic – where rural roads pass through little villages on the outskirts of the historical town. In addition, it intends to transform many traditional un-signalised intersections into roundabouts. There are also plans to redesign five locations: Fabbri/wagner, Michelini/Eridano, Marconi/Michelini, Modena/Eridano and SP “Cenese” near Porotto. Ferrara commits itself to regular reports on the progress made in implementing these commitments.



Bicycle Art - A bicycle shop in Ferrara

the Bicicard, a special tourist card enabling tourists to get free car parking outside the city, giving them a free bicycle to use for the rest of their stay, and discounts in hotels, restaurants, and shops participating in the initiative.

Information leaflets have since been created showing tourists where to cycle, which roads have cycle paths and which public and private structures welcome cyclists, alongside seven hiring stations which are available for tourists. These are just some examples of targets that are always followed by printed information that help both locals and tourists – attracting many people to come to Ferrara not only for its monuments and great shows, but also for the joy of riding through the city by bicycle.

An Example for Italy to Follow

The municipality of Ferrara, in the context of Agenda 21 – a UN programme dedicated to sustainable development, constantly monitors the cycling mobility in the city, promoting its use and conducting studies using indicators to discover and mend gaps in service,

and improve this little Italian miracle.

In statistical terms the results are astonishing. The mobility of academics is around 20% and rising, and since 1996, the year the *Biciplan* was created, the use of bicycles for daily transportation has risen from 21% to

“In the 60s, Ferrara adopted a total closure of the city centre to any polluting mode of transport”

27.4% of the local population, and more than 30% overall, if we consider non-residents and university students. In addition, public bikes have been lent to workers, alongside the offer of secure and easily accessible public bicycle parking, in order to reduce the use of cars in daily commutes.

Political sharing and extended communication are at the base of the city's success, and local administrators are convinced that the

creation of the Bicycle Office (recognised by the Ministry of Environment as a fundamental example of sustainable transportation) has represented the ideal instrument to accelerate, coordinate and put in shape ideas, actions and projects that have had an incredible impact on the city. And this is demonstrated also by the fact that a wide variety of municipal structures similar to the Ferrara Bicycle Office have since been created in such towns as Torino, Bari, Venice, Verona and Pescara. A total of 30 cities in Italy now share the dream of Ferrara, and it is with them that this city is working to better coordinate Agenda 21 efforts.

So if you are thinking of a place to visit sometime in the future, and are looking for an accessible, clean and happy place, why not get a grip on one of Ferrara's public bikes and let yourself ride through the streets of this marvellous city? It will show you things you had never dreamed of in this car-centric country that is Italy.

For more information about Ferrara please visit www.ferrarainbici.it (Italian only)
All images © www.ferrarainbici.it

The Red Bikes of Emilia-Romagna

At the beginning of the 20th century, Italy witnessed growing social unrest among left-wing political factions and parties. Social inequality, food shortages and lack of social reforms led to a series of factory occupations by workers and, thus, police brutality became more and more common. Consequently, union workers organised to counteract this offensive by the central government. The *Ciclisti Rossi de Emilia-Romagna* (Red Bikes of Emilia-Romagna) were groups of socialist and communist workers devoted to the cause of

revolution, that appeared in 1913 in almost every factory around the north-eastern regions of Italy. The bicycle was the only means of transport for most workers, and it was in factories that these cyclists first met and organised into groups. Cycling fast through the fields and streets of Emilia-Romagna, they could swiftly pass news (strikes, agitprop, rallies) from town to town supporting their cause. Some of these cyclists were workers and sportsmen, but most of the Red Cyclists were political activists who saw in this means

of transport a unique weapon for liberty and the dissemination of information.

By the beginning of 1920, and the rise of Fascism, these groups were declared outlaws and torn apart by fascist police. They were victims of some of the most brutal assassinations in Emilia-Romagna. Ferruccio Ghinaglia, one of the most courageous of the Red Cyclists who organised several groups of hundreds of Red Cyclists all around the Pavia region, was shot in 1921 by fascist police.



The Bike-Sharing Phenomenon

The History of Bike-Sharing By Paul DeMaio

Bike-sharing programmes have received increasing attention in recent years as an answer to the public's desire to increase bike usage, and lessen the environmental impacts of transportation. Originally a concept from the revolutionary 1960s, bike-sharing's growth had been slow until new technology spurred a rapid expansion of this innovative concept.

Bicycles have several advantages as a mode of transportation for short-distance urban trips: they reach underserved destinations, require less infrastructure and generally do not add to congestion. In addition, they are relatively inexpensive to purchase and maintain, do not create pollution in their operation, and provide the user with exercise. Their value is undeniable when one also considers that these bicycles may increase trips on other modes of public transportation by expanding the reach of trains and buses.

There have been three generations of bike-sharing systems over the past 40 years. The 1st generation began in 1964 in Amsterdam with the *Witte Fietsen* or White Bikes. Ordinary bikes painted white were provided for public use. Individuals were to find a bike, ride it to their destination, and leave it for the next user. Things didn't go as planned, as bikes were thrown into the canals or appropriated for private use, so the programme collapsed within days.

Nearly 30 years later, in 1995, a 2nd generation was launched in Copenhagen called *Bycyklen*, or City Bikes, with many improvements over the previous generation. These bikes were specially designed for intense utilitarian use with solid rubber tyres, wheels with advertising plates, and could be picked up and returned at specific locations throughout the central city with a coin deposit. While more formalised than the previous generation – with stations and an organisation to operate the programme – these bikes still experienced theft due to the anonymity of the customer.

A new breed of bike-sharing was seen soon after in 1996 at Portsmouth University in England with Bikeabout. This involved

using a magnetic stripe card which the student would swipe to rent a bike. This and the following 3rd generation systems were 'smartened' with a variety of technological improvements including electronically locking racks or bike locks, telecommunication systems, smartcards, mobile phone access and on-board computers. Bike-sharing grew slowly in the following years until the launch of *Velo'v* in Lyon, France caused a stir.

Before bike-sharing, Lyon wasn't a bike-friendly city – only 1.5% of trips were made by bike. After Lyon created more bike facilities and introduced its *Velo'v* programme in 2005, bicycling increased as more felt safer cycling. Bike traffic has jumped around 500% since the launch of *Velo'v* with one quarter of this increase coming from bike-sharing. *Velo'v* reported 1.5 million km travelled by customers in June 2008, and 36 million km since the programme's inception in 2005. This equates to 7,260 tons of CO₂ saved for the same distance travelled by car.

As the success of France's second city became known, the capital took note. In 2007, Paris launched its own bike-sharing program, *Vélib'*, with about 10,600 bikes soon expanded to 20,600 bikes. This massive undertaking and its better than expected success changed the course of bike-sharing history and generated enormous interest in this transit mode around the world.


To date, bike-sharing programmes have primarily been offered as a bonus to local governments by advertising companies, such as the big three of JCDecaux, Clear Channel and Cemusa. The municipality gets a bike-sharing programme run by the advertising company while they gain locations for their adverts in public space. It's a convenient deal for governments who can't afford to provide the service otherwise.

As the demand for bike-sharing increased, more companies became involved in the industry and created their own technologies. Many of the new systems have no advertising component, but rather require direct subsidy from the local government in addition to user fees to be financially sustainable. These

new bike-sharing systems allow jurisdictions and universities either with populations too small to make advertising profitable or where advertising on public space is prohibited, to consider launching their own services.

As we approach 100 bike-sharing programmes worldwide with as many as 10 times this planned, the future of bike-sharing is bright. Gérard Collomb, the President of Greater Lyon, said, "there are two types of mayors: those who have bike-sharing and those who want bike-sharing." This certainly seems to be the case as each bike-sharing programme creates more interest in this form of transit – call it a virtuous cycle.

Europe certainly has the lion's share of programmes due to forward-thinking elected officials and a greater commitment to cycling in general, but the idea is finally taking hold elsewhere. In the East, New Zealand realised three programmes this year and China one. North America saw its first couple of programmes late this past summer with the launch of Washington, DC's programme, followed by three additional programmes in Denver, Minneapolis and Montreal. Each bike fleet was small, but plans for the four cities include expansion. Many other cities and universities throughout North America are in the process of selecting their bike-sharing vendor. South America's first bike-sharing programme opens in November in Rio de Janeiro with a handful of others for 2009, including Buenos Aires and Santiago. The Middle East should see its first programme soon in Tel Aviv, and Melbourne and Brisbane are on their way in Australia.

As the price of fuel continues to rise, traffic congestion worsens, population grows, and a greater world-wide consciousness arises around climate change, it will be even more necessary for leaders around the world to find modes of transportation to move people in environmentally sound, efficient and economically feasible ways. Fortunately, bike-sharing fits these needs and not a moment too soon. Not a panacea, as bike-sharing's detractors point out, bike-sharing is a complementary mode of transport and another tool in the toolbox of public transportation. 

The Bike-Share Boom at North American Colleges

By Kristen Steele

Five US Dollars can barely buy a burrito in today's economy, but new this year at McLennan Community College in Waco, Texas, it will get you a bike, helmet and lock for an entire semester. McLennan is among the growing number of United States colleges that are peddling bikes to students.

According to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, there are nearly 80 free bike share or bike rental programmes on North American campuses – over a dozen have been launched in 2008 alone. The trend doesn't seem to be slowing down. "I get calls from universities every week wanting to know how we got it up and going," says Watts Magnum, Program Manager of Duke Bikes at Duke University in North Carolina. Duke's hi-profile programme started in 2007 with a fleet of cruiser bikes that could be checked out for free by students at their Outpost adventure gear station. The fleet has now grown to 150 bikes, including mountain bikes, cruisers and hybrids that come equipped with lights, and some with baskets.

At University of Colorado Boulder, students can check out a "Buff Bike" single speed cruiser, for up to two days, free with a student ID. The bike share programme, which began there in 2003, has seen tremendous growth. According to Peter Roper, programme manager, Buff Bikes is at 100% rental capacity with bikes going out as soon as they are turned in. "We have doubled the fleet almost three times since its inception, and will be doubling it again this winter," says Roper.

Magnum has a similar experience at Duke saying their hybrid bikes and mountain bikes, "go back out within five to ten minutes of coming in." And the University of Rochester's

City Cycles programme has reached 10% of the undergraduate population, according to its organisers. Their website reports that they have loaned 4,127 bicycles to 1,171 students in the last 18 months – an average of 230 rentals a month.

Two students at UC Berkeley are pioneering a new bike-sharing programme, launching this fall, after winning a US\$10,000 grant from the university's annual Bears Breaking Boundaries contest. For US\$15 a semester, students will be able to check out one of a fleet of 45 bicycles from the Green Bike Share project. An Energy Resources class will require students to help facilitate the programme as part of a field study. And even though the programme has yet to launch, co-founder Justin Wiley is already thinking ahead. "In the next stage we want to allow people to check out bikes for a semester, a week, a day, or just a couple of hours." Wiley also mentions they are looking at ways to incorporate technology into their project, like some European bike-share programmes.

College bike-sharing programmes are as diverse as the campuses themselves:

- The Community Bike Project at the State University of New York at Cortland (SUNY Cortland) uses the familiar yellow bike model where bikes are painted yellow and scattered around campus (unlocked) for students to use.
- The Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity manages ReCycle, the bike-sharing programme of the University of Maine, where they currently rebuild around 100 bikes a year.
- The Bike Loan Program at the University of Idaho provides international students with free long-term rentals of bikes that have been rebuilt by students.

- Bike Share at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia allows students to sign out bikes at various campus locations and return them to any bike share location.

- Bikes belonging to Davidson's Community Bicycle Program are adopted by a residence hall on campus where they are decorated and named.

Crowded campuses, health concerns and environmental targets are just a few of the reasons more and more campuses are directing students out of cars and onto bikes. According to Peter Lange, Duke's Provost, "It's all about creating more ways for people to come together around shared interests." At UC Berkeley, Wiley says the programme was initiated out of their work on sustainability issues. Organisers at both schools mentioned that Paris' bike-share programme was an inspiration.

No matter what the motivation, inspiration, or what the bike share programme looks like, all have one thing in common: making more bikes available to more people. As universities are more progressive microcosms of greater society, this trend could bode a brighter future with fewer cars.

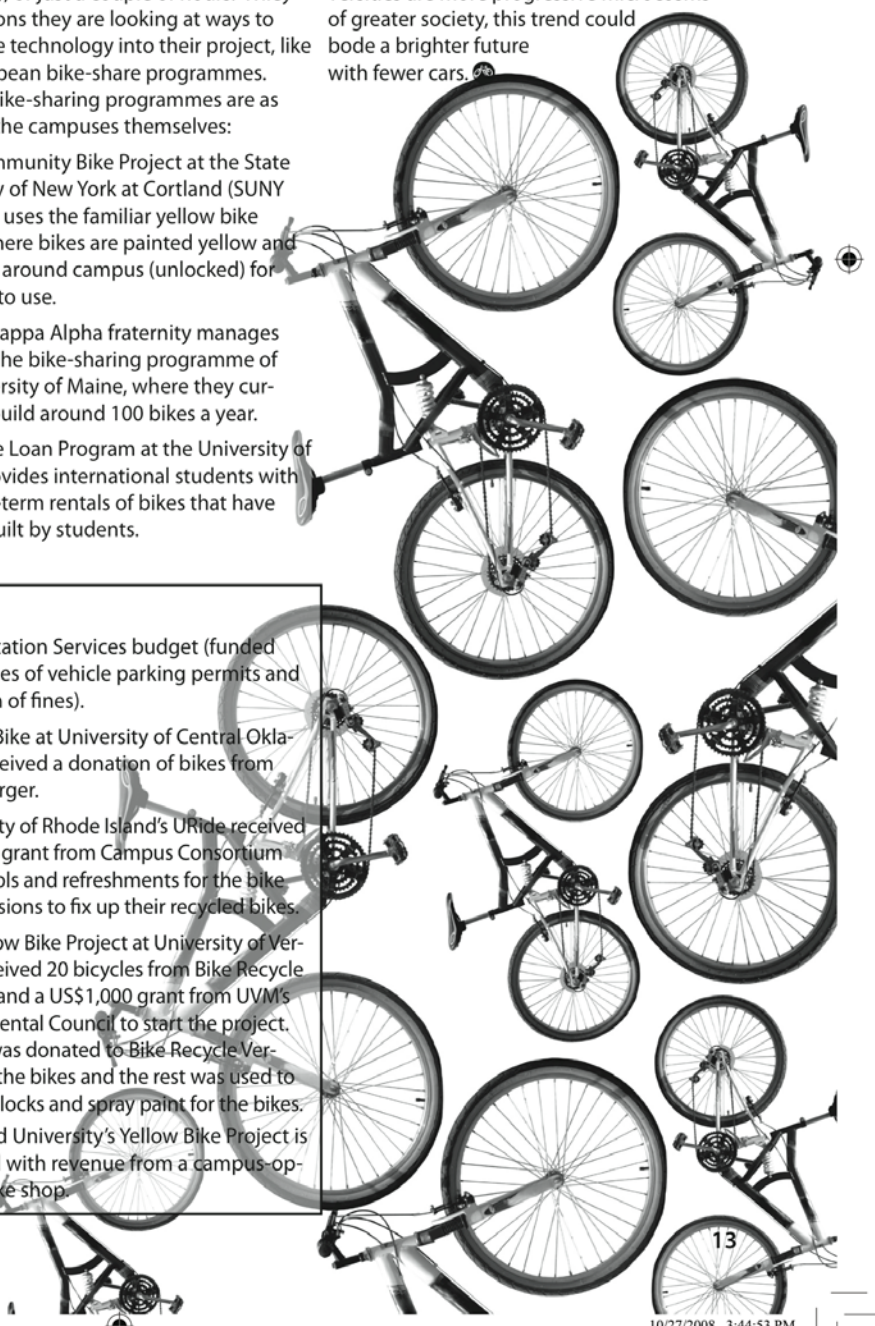
Bucks for Bikes

So how do campuses get the money or other support to launch a bike-share programme and keep the programme going? Here's how a few of them have done it:

- Duke Bikes is operated by the Outpost station which is funded to the tune of US\$24,000 year out of student activities fees.
- The Purple Bike Program at Texas Christian University received a US\$4,080 TCU Vision in Action grant which paid for five bikes with a basket, lock, helmet and monthly maintenance.
- University of Colorado Boulder's Buff Bikes receives US\$25,000 per year, funded by the sales of bicycle registrations (an anti-theft programme) at the price of US\$10 per registration, 2,500 registrations per year. To supplement this funding, one-time capital funding has been available for the past few years, available from both the Parking and

Transportation Services budget (funded by the sales of vehicle parking permits and collection of fines).

- Bum-a-Bike at University of Central Oklahoma received a donation of bikes from Flatire Burger.
- University of Rhode Island's URide received a US\$500 grant from Campus Consortium to buy tools and refreshments for the bike repair sessions to fix up their recycled bikes.
- The Yellow Bike Project at University of Vermont received 20 bicycles from Bike Recycle Vermont and a US\$1,000 grant from UVM's Environmental Council to start the project. US\$500 was donated to Bike Recycle Vermont for the bikes and the rest was used to purchase locks and spray paint for the bikes.
- St. Cloud University's Yellow Bike Project is sustained with revenue from a campus-operated bike shop.



Is Bike-Sharing Altering our Notions of Possession? A World Possessed

By Chris Coleman

I imagine." Simply wrap quotation marks around the word and you conjure up John Lennon's anthem that defined the peace movement.

Surely the song's appeal goes beyond a catchy melody, and touches on ideals that we usually ignore in our pragmatic ambitions. When Lennon wondered if we can imagine no possessions, he must have meant our cars and bicycles as well. Whether we're conscious of it or not, the catapulting rise of bike-sharing and car-sharing is fulfilling the wish of the "dreamers" for convenience of individual scaled transport without the need for ownership. Though peak oil and climate change may be on the lips of those promoting these sharing schemes, a return to the values of sharing is a positive, if subconscious, by-product.

Five-years ago, no one could have guessed the explosion in the popularity of bike-sharing. Over 90% of the 100 or so currently functioning global programmes have begun only in the past two years. Cities with new programmes like Barcelona, boasting a current fleet of 6,000, can call it nothing short of a success. Anna Domenech, who collaborated on the management of the system of the city's *Bicing* system told *Carbusters*, "the organisers of *Bicing* did not expect success so soon. They had as many subscribers in the first month as they expected in the whole year (40,000)." The success in Paris is also indisputable judging merely from the fact that they have increased their *Vélib'* bicycle fleet from 10,600, when it opened for use in the summer of 2007, to 20,600 (to be 28,100 by the end of this year). Though the over-all success of this public sharing of bicycles can only be answered by time, its future is definitely looking up.

Car-sharing has also seen positive development recently. 600 cities globally now have formal programmes, and the US alone

has 5,838 cars shared by 279,174 members. This advancement of car-sharing must be seen as a good thing, for a car shared is used less than a car owned – by 72% according to a study by the Swiss Energy Department.

Wasted Space

A principle benefit for sharing a car or bike, for city commuting at least, is space. Space is a precious commodity in urban areas. When you stick an average of 3,050 people per kilometre, as in your average city in Europe, or 15,700 in India, the space lost to cars on the sides of roads is no less than criminal. A private car spends an average of 95% of its functioning life parked, and undoubtedly bicycles spend a similar amount of time in unoccupied idling. In the innocent early days of the car, parking was seen as unlimited but it has inevitably become a scarce resource. The extreme end of the space-eating spectrum can be found in US suburbs where the fields of asphalt surrounding malls, with fast-food joints serving as oases in the sea of black, easily occupy more area than the commercial buildings themselves. Donald Shoup calculated in his book *The High Cost of Free Parking* that the US spent US\$127 billion in public funds to subsidise public parking, more than half of the amount spent on Medicare.

The bicycle's beautifully slender shape leaves it rather guilt-free on the private parking issue, though it can come into trouble. At Dutch railway stations bike parking facilities for tens of thousands of bicycles are often at capacity. Subsequently, they have been given graded coloured ribbons if left parked for a determined period and are removed if left for over two months. Then there is the problem of dealing with bent and broken bicycles ubiquitously seen on bicycle parking stations.

Use It or Share It


An object can either be used and loved or neglected and forgotten. Just look into your closets and attics to remind yourself of all the little projects you've abandoned and the corresponding purchases that were ultimately left tucked in a dark corner. Sadly, bicycles also fall victim to the same fate. Just as many dogs given as Christmas presents become neglected and abandoned, not all of us have the DIY spirit to take on the occasional basic repair tasks required for bicycles, leaving thousands upon thousands sitting gathering

dust in sheds and apartments. Compare that with the transparency of bike-sharing where any successful programme has a team of bicycle repairmen on the job daily. Take Paris' innovative *Vélib'* repair system where a barge moves up and down to 12 landing points on the Seine river to ship damaged public bicycles to a shop with 10 full-time bicycle mechanics.

I guess that for every bicycle seen used on a daily or even weekly basis two are languishing in silence and needing a tune-up. If we added all these bicycles up and calculated their daily use, the figure would fall well below once per day. This doesn't hold a candle to the daily usage in the bike-sharing programmes in Barcelona or Paris, 10 and 3.5 times respectively. I propose cities to offer citizens to turn in their forgotten, unused bicycles to be repaired, painted, then used in municipal bike-sharing programmes. Think of it as a kind of amnesty in the name of sharing.

Imagine All the Bicycles

The aim of these bike-sharing schemes in transportation terms are clear. I interviewed Matthias Wegscheide, from Vienna's bike-sharing programme called Citybike. He stated it thus: "to establish cycling as an alternative means of public transportation and raise the bike share in overall traffic." A survey conducted by Citybike found that a full one-third of their users rode the public bicycles exclusively. But, Wegscheide clarifies that "our goal isn't to ultimately replace the [ownership of the] bike. Instead, we offer a service that is attractive for everyone... A survey in Lyon showed that the introduction of their bicycle rental system also increased 'private' bicycle traffic." More bicycles, whether private or public, on the road brings a safety in numbers and increases the likelihood that the municipality will designate street space for the bicycle.

Could all this sharing of bicycles and cars be heralding a new era when we dare to imagine the values of generosity over consumerism? It's easy to forget that a mere 200 years ago, 97% of us humans lived in villages of 17 to 50 people where most objects were considered part of the commons. One need not be a socialist revolutionary to advocate more sharing; the rate at which we're depleting the Earth's precious resources leaves us no other choice. What better time than now to live the dream? 





The City for Everyone By Étienne von Bertrab

Ciudad Para Todos

The origin of *Ciudad para Todos* (The City for Everyone) goes back to September 2007, when a group of disgruntled citizens from Guadalajara, Mexico, decided to protest against an urban freeway unexpectedly introduced by the transport authority. The improvised measure – aimed at helping suburban motorists get into and out of the city faster – shocked many. Crossings were simply blocked, pedestrians were left with no safe crossing zone for kilometres; public transport, cyclists and local motorists also suffered the collateral effects of the government's pro-automobile (and pro-rich) policy. Adding insult to injury, the authority chose World Carfree Day to implement it.

Direct action has been a component since the group's origin; right from the beginning they have taken innovative and creative approaches to their actions. Very quickly they realised the difficulty in conveying their message – in one of their first protests they upset other citizens (motorists). This led to a change in strategy, and after Jalisco's governor ignored any criticism and backed the urban freeway, they decided to do a "Mobility Festival" in front of his residence. Seven hundred people signed a petition demanding that the authorities stop the project, open up information in order to allow public scrutiny and discussion over alternatives, and finally, to present a comprehensive mobility plan for the metropolitan area. The unsustainable pattern is clear: Guadalajara is home to around 4 million inhabitants and already has 1.5 million automobiles – more than 300 add to its streets every day. The emphasis was on the need to shift towards more inclusive and sustainable transport. Since that moment, and motivated by the government's disdain, it became clear that the movement was here to stay.

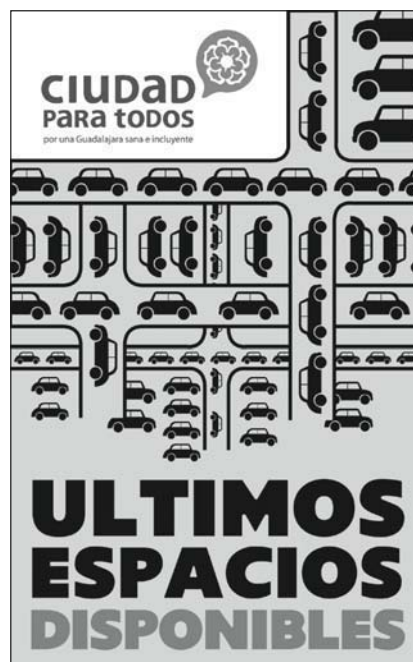
Ciudad para Todos is part of a larger movement of organised citizens, specialists and environmental NGOs demanding a policy shift. Overall, the groups have been strengthened by the worsening traffic and air pollution conditions, the lack of improvement in the city's transit system and the hostility to pedestrians and cyclists – all of them allowed, if not promoted, by the government's impoverished vision. In particular, the bicycle movement has gained enormous strength: night rides occur almost every evening in an ordinary week, and a peak-hour Critical Mass

was inaugurated in the city while celebrating this year's Carfree Day (around 600 took to the streets – including the referred urban freeway). The groups have built political trust and legitimacy and are in conversation with those local authorities that appear to listen. But there is a general absence of political will to implement serious change, to give the city back to its people or to pursue an urban sustainability agenda.

Ciudad para Todos is characterised by its constant and creative mobility festivals, interventions in public spaces and 'Across the city': in their recent anniversary they encouraged citizens and other groups to cross the city on foot (inspired by the Urban Earth project <www.urbanearth.co.uk>). Over two days, tens of citizens walked, observed and documented not only the deplorable conditions for pedestrians but also accessibility, housing, public space and environmental issues. They have at least one meeting per week, which is open to anyone who is interested. Smaller work meetings are frequent, planning interventions and projects, and producing creative and informative material. They organise public talks with specialists and people that have something valuable to share in issues such as urbanism, planning, mobility, energy and democracy. It is all based on voluntary work – so far – and they've been very lucky in building an environment that keeps tens of very active members motivated. The group has become a melting pot of great ideas from committed students, academics, professionals, specialists and ordinary people who want to do something about their communities.

But they know that in order to keep the organisation alive and to pursue their objectives they must build a more solid base. They've embarked on a long-term planning exercise and are trying to develop a structure that allows them to be strategic and effective while keeping the freshness and ingenuity in their actions. They've committed themselves to decision-making by consensus – the only path towards sustainable communities – although it is time-consuming and not always easy to achieve.

They also recognise that they face, together with their fellow citizens, a greater challenge: to improve the quality of their democracy. The shift in political power in Mexico has achieved very little, and increasingly people are realising that their representative democ-



All Graphics © Laura Méndez

racy is in crisis. Mexican society left the public realm in the hands of political parties, and the political class is increasingly distant from ordinary people and out of touch with the issues they face. Can there be sustainability without democracy? They think it can't happen. This is the reason why *Ciudad para Todos* has adopted, besides mobility and city issues, an emphasis on citizens' participation. In a larger movement with a diverse set of civil society organisations, they are trying to build a long-term agenda that can help transform their State, through people's empowerment. It's a challenging agenda, but in a city and a country which is falling apart, it seems that strengthening civil society is the only way that they will bring about positive change and rights for all. 🚲

For more information about *Ciudad para Todos*, please visit www.ciudadparatodos.org

Update: The urban freeway is still being pursued and the transport secretary has managed to avoid discussion with groups and specialists for over a year. In parallel, the local mayor, who claimed to embrace a green agenda, has only committed to creating 10 km of cycle paths in a three-year period.





Islington, London, UK

An estimated 1,500 people enjoyed Carfree Day in Islington as busy Liverpool Road was transformed into an open-air park. Families, residents and visitors basked in glorious sunshine as they enjoyed picnics on the grass or lounged around in deckchairs provided for the day. There was live music from a local band and free popcorn on offer. Normally, Liverpool Road is a very busy street with pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles all competing for space, but with the road closed people made the most of the brilliant weather and took the chance to enjoy a carfree day.

By John Robson

Harrogate, UK

The sun shone for Harrogate's first Carfree Day. It kicked off with interviews with mayor John Fox, Phil Willis MP and others at Harrogate bus station, where passengers and bus drivers received pastries. Over 600 people registered for free day bus passes. It closed with a bike ride from Harrogate College to St. Peter's Church, where live music awaited the 100-odd cyclists, not forgetting the unicyclist! And next year? Plans are underway, so get ready to leave your car at home and start pedalling.

www.harrogatecarfreeday.com

Prague, Czech Republic

Four thousand people joined the largest annual Critical Mass bike ride that Prague has seen. Despite the cold weather, more cyclists than last year found their way to the street festival in front of the Rudolfinum, where the ride started at 3 pm. People of all ages rode for two hours along the 16 km route throughout the city – alongside well-known politicians and artists. www.auto-mat.cz

Toronto, Canada See Action! Section

San Luis Potosi, Mexico

The *Facultad del Habitat* at the State University of San Luis Potosi celebrated Carfree Day with a forum on mobility and sustainability, a screening of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, a talk about climate change from the State Secretary of Ecology, a Critical Mass organised by Kolektive Soya and the planting of 80 trees on Paseo de la Presa San Jose by local group Bicitropicos. www.myspace.com/dmsaslp2008

Curitiba, Brazil See Action! Section



Florianopolis, Brazil

The programme included a debate on mobility with more than 50 participants; distribution of 300 leaflets at traffic lights; a modal split challenge – where the cyclist was victorious; a walk and bike ride with more than 200 participants; a bicycle ride in a new cycle lane with 15 activists and an afternoon Parking Day (Vaga Viva). Organised by ViaCiclo, UDESC, Bicicletada Floripa, Escola da Fazenda, Campeche Community Radio and Community Health Council of Fazenda do Rio Tavares Neighbourhood.

By Giselle Noceti Ammon Xavier
www.viaciclo.org.br

World Carfree Day 2008

With unprecedented participation again this year, the World Carfree Day continues to go from strength to strength, and is growing in both size and popularity. We cannot possibly hope to cover all the events worldwide, so here, and in the Action! Section (page 8-9), we include some of the highlights from the day, and from the European Mobility Week.

World Carfree Day 2008

Kyiv, Ukraine

A group of enthusiasts organised a cycle race, press conference, several competitions and musical concert in Mariinskij Park, Kyiv, for Ukraine's first ever World Carfree Day event. Only 30 cyclists took part in the 26 km race due to bad weather, but over 100 people gathered for the following competitions and concert. The next morning a cyclist won the Commuter Contest between a car, bicycle and pedestrian from the city outskirts to the centre. The event was organised by the Kyiv Cyclists' Association, Velox cycling club, ArtPole art agency, with eco-partners National Ecological Centre of Ukraine and the British Council project "Challenge Europe".



Sofia, Bulgaria See Action! Section

Moscow, Russia See Action! Section

Pune, India

Pune celebrated World Carfree Day with a bicycle rally organised by civic groups Parisar, Janwani, Pune Cycle Prasththan and Rotaract Club. About 200 people cycled down four different routes and converged on Sambhaji Park. The cyclists included students, activists, IT sector employees, government servants, businessmen, housewives and senior citizens, indicating that the concern for sustainable mobility cuts across the social spectrum. The participants included Pune's municipal commissioner Mr. Praveensinh Pardeshi, and Mr. Dario Hidalgo and Mr. Madhav Pai, sustainable transport experts from Embarq who were visiting Pune in connection with Pune's BRT.

The rally ended with a demand by the citizens that the city should provide for better cycling facilities, better walking facilities and better public transport rather than spending money on infrastructure that will primarily benefit cars and two-wheelers.

government.wikia.com/wiki/Pune_car_free_day



Dunedin, New Zealand

To encourage students to leave their cars at home Students for Environmental Action Otago (SEA) organised a "Free Bike Maintenance" stand at Otago University. Students were able to bring along their bicycles and get a free bike tune-up, and a discount voucher for Dunedin's local bike shop, Cycle Surgery, if there was anything that could not be fixed on the day. SEA Otago also gave away free lunch to students in exchange for a story about their bike ride, bus ride or walk to university that morning. The event was very successful and SEA achieved their aim of supporting students that cycle to university every day. By Sharon McKenzie



This year the WCN also released its Carfree Day wiki – to help facilitate and coordinate events worldwide and provide a comprehensive list of events and contacts for the press. If you had an event this year, and will again next year, then please add it to our wiki and help promote Carfree Day even further: editthis.info/wcd/Main_Page

More reports online, including Zagreb, Edinburgh and Brighton, at www.worldcarfree.net

The Financial Car Crash

How the Credit Crisis Alters the Car Landscape

By Theo Haris

October 2008 was anything but kind for auto industries. At the time of writing, the following were quite indicative news: Swedish Volvo, owned by Ford, cut 3,300 jobs, amounting to 12% of its workforce; Renault fired 2,000 workers in 19 countries, while it had fired 4,000 alone in France in September; and General Motors (GM) was in such a desperate financial situation that it considered mortgaging its brand new headquarters in Detroit. What is the earthquake that is shaking the self-proclaimed "engines of the economy" to the core?

Credit Over

The plunge in the carmakers' financial status did not come out of the blue. This year's spiralling oil prices were already taking their toll: in August it was estimated that the US auto industry would lose US\$276 billion in 2008. However, what is happening now seems to dwarf these already bleak forecasts: the credit crisis has hit the car manufacturers hard. The reason is very simple: in a period when huge banks have gone bankrupt while others are struggling with claws and teeth to stave off financial disaster, few are willing (or stupid enough) to provide credit; and consumers use credit for more than 90% of all new vehicle purchases, according to industry figures... No credit offered, no new cars bought; it's that simple.

Moreover, car industries themselves are running short of cash and simply cannot afford to borrow money – some interest rates for loans have jumped as high as 20%. The financial services arms of giants such as GM and Ford are squeezed dry. GM is burning through more than US\$1 billion in cash a month and drew US\$3.4 billion from its revolving credit line. Ford likewise put their hands deep in their pocket to repay US\$1.5 billion in debt on previous bond sales, which it would refinance rather than pay in a more stable economic environment. Ford's credit arm recently decided to stop providing vehicle loans to Mazda, so it could concentrate on its own domestic brands.

Even though both companies claim to have enough liquidity to survive, their own credit giving power is in doubt. Fitch Ratings, an independent credit rating agency, downgraded Ford's credit rating to "CCC" from "B-", which in the credit system is equivalent to non-investment or "junk" grade. It won't come as a surprise if both companies go bankrupt during 2009.

Stocks Plunge

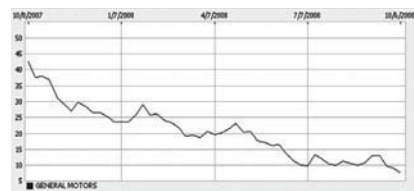
The car is going down. According to MarketWatch, the value of Ford has plummeted by 73% over the last 12 months, while GM's value has collapsed by 82% over the same period, reaching a 58-year low. It's no wonder Citigroup Global Markets downgraded both GM's and Ford's stock to "sell". This steep fall in stocks stems from an equivalent plunge in sales. Mark LaNeve, head of North American sales for GM, told CNN the company is losing 10,000 to 12,000 sales a month because of tighter lending practices. Although car sales were already going down because of high oil prices, now they continue to plunge even though the price of black gold has pulled to around US\$70 per barrel. During the last week of September alone the US car industry lost approximately 100,000 vehicle sales due to the credit crunch.

What This All Means

While the credit crunch is hard to comprehend even for the best specialists in the world, some things are clear. First and foremost, a new economic era is dawning. The neoliberal model that has steered the world's economy over the past 30 years has hit the wall and government intervention – even nationalisations! – is now the new dogma. It's a new world that we live in and hopefully a less brave one.

Regarding the auto industry in particular, things look bleak indeed. Given how hard times are, it is questionable whether the US government would provide US\$25 billion in federal loans (intended to help develop fuel efficiency technologies) to struggling Detroit companies if it wasn't an election year. And even though governments around the world injected trillions of dollars to the banking system, fears of a global recession did not subside, especially as it became clear that the money wouldn't trickle down as fast as expected.

What has trickled down is general panic and a decreased flow of money. This has affected first and foremost the car dealers. According to the National Automobile Dealers Association, nearly 600 of USA's 20,770 franchised new-car dealerships have closed their doors in 2008. Among the casualties filing for bankruptcy protection in October was Bill Heard Enterprises, the top-selling Chevrolet dealership group in the USA. In overall perspective what we have is: less car factories, less car retail venues, less cars bought. Sounds like a dream come true.



GM Stock 10/2007-2008 © <http://moneycentral.msn.com>

The Future?

In such a complex system, it is not clear what will ensue. Things are hazy although some trends are clear. People have been using credit to buy new cars since the 1920s, stopping only during the Great Depression. The Second World War and its repercussions were pivotal in steering the economy towards increased consumerism of the abundant technological innovations spearheaded through military R&D – leading to more cars. Hopefully the same pattern won't repeat itself. This is where we step in.

The credit crunch provides a similar reduction in car sales and ownership; this creates an opportunity for the new innovations that have been spearheaded through the concept of sustainability to take the lead. Now is the time to push even harder for a more rational usage of our public space, to show how the alternatives the carfree movement proposes are not only environmentally and socially sound but, first and foremost, economically rational – that's the current language paradigm whether we like it or not.

To be clear, the credit crunch is not a game. It is a massive phenomenon that will affect everyone on this planet, even though its big picture escapes most of us. Already thousands are losing their jobs or are finding themselves without cash in hand, and the demise of the auto industry serves as an indicator of what might follow in other sectors. Global economic growth will certainly slow and while this is certainly a beneficial thing in the long-run (especially for the climate), it will be hard for our comfort-maniac society. Even harder for those who slumber in a value system where cars are exemplified.

What the credit crisis has accomplished is to bring on the collapse of a system that was unsustainable; fuelled by greed, disrespect and stupidity. A system that found its culmination in the diffusion of automobiles in all corners of our fragmented cities. Now the auto bubble is bursting. It's too early and hard to say whether it will survive intact, transform or eclipse. But the wind now blows in our favour; let's grab this opportunity and make the most out of it. ☺

Interview with Professor Dr. Hermann Knoflachner

By Theo Haris

Who's Crazy Now?

© N. Poetzcher

Thirty years ago revolutionary Austrian thinker Hermann Knoflachner was proclaimed crazy by newspapers for his innovative ideas. What was he advocating? Things that are currently lauded by most progressive people as beneficial for all: more pedestrian roads, priority for public transportation, more bicycles. Today, the internationally esteemed professor, president of the Club of Vienna and head of the Institute for Transport Planning and Traffic Engineering at the Vienna University of Technology, is not considered crazy anymore but a visionary who has succeeded in putting into practice his "utopian" planning. Now he proposes something even more revolutionary: driving requires much less energy input than walking, but the additional fossil-fueled boost creates a far greater energy output, thus making cars addictive. Speaking with Carbusters during World Carfree Day he discusses how car usage has spread like a virus, how one can demonstrate the stupidity of a car by donning a 'walkmobile,' and why change is inevitable...

Today is World Carfree Day. Do you think the event is fulfilling its goal?

If the question is whether it leads people to start thinking about the future of fossil-driven energy, then it could become a success if cities, countries and communities support this idea. But, if they are neglecting it and doing nothing, it will be meaningless. But I think active support is increasing, astonishingly, more and more.

Currently transportation measures focus, at least in Europe, around mobility, as exemplified by the European Mobility Week. Would it perhaps be better to have a European Accessibility Week?

This is difficult. Accessibility doesn't tell the people really what should be accessible. Mobility is not also very clearly defined, because the key issue is what kind of mobility you have and the amount of energy used to fulfil your mobility needs. It could be called "The Week of No Wasting Precious Energy for Unsustainable Mobility". This would be the

CARBUSTERS #36 | NOV 2008 - FEB 2009

"The car is slipping into the core of our brain and changes our view of the world"

clear definition, because at the moment we are wasting huge amounts of precious fossil energy for a kind of mobility that is, in rational terms, very stupid. To carry a person at a speed of 80 kph we are moving a machine weighing 2,000 kilos.

Even if cars were not fuelled by fossil energy but, for instance, by electricity coming from renewable sources, would you consider this a solution?

No. This wouldn't solve the problems of safety and noise – both of which are related to speed – and also the problem of space. Cars are eating up precious public space and whether driven by fossil or electric energy,

there's no difference concerning these three basic indicators. What the car industry is doing now, by trying to divert the public view to such 'solutions', is tricky. But these basic problems cannot be solved by car producers; they can only be solved by society and political procedures.

You have mentioned speed twice. In this society, where we are fixated with the idea of sparing no second of time, do we need to slow down generally to have positive changes in transportation? And is this feasible?

Absolutely! I'm seeing this not only through my research, but also in practice. Nearly every year I'm able to reduce the speed of one or two cities or communities with very positive effects on the environment, society and the local economy. High speeds are profitable only for the big international corporations because they can centralise and exploit their own structures much better. But if you reduce speed, you give much more power to the people.

You said "cars are eating up precious space". Is this what you wanted to demonstrate with the 'walkmobile'?

The invention of this 'walking tool' [page 20] in the 70s was to show how stupid the problem of congestion is: the limited space of a city disappearing because some members of society are using too much of it, firstly for parking and secondly for moving. So, I invented this walking tool, which is the same size as a

car, and everybody sees that it is totally crazy for one person to occupy so much space; it is antisocial behaviour. The walking tool demonstrates in a very impressive way the whole culture and social responsibility of man, and how this is given up as soon as someone sits in a car. If you give up your upright position, you give up all your social and human culture. And this hasn't been recognised.

A few years ago I was able to discover through research that the car has a similar effect on society and people as a virus does on a cell. The car is not only a mechanical tool; the car is slipping into the core of our brain and changes our view of the world. We don't see the world anymore like humans, because humans would never accept this misuse of public space. A human value system would never allow this destruction of children's life-space and health. Our society has been totally affected by this car virus and therefore we are not able to think anymore in a clear way. This is my main endeavour in teaching and in my practical work: to clean the brain from the power of this virus. If you don't have a clean brain, based on a human system of values, you cannot make any proper planning or any proper decision.

How did this mutation of the human psyche happen?

This mutation is happening due to a fact that was discovered 35 years ago: that the car – due to its energy engine – is directly connected to the system controlling all our bodily habits: the energy level in the hypothalamus of our brain. This is the connection through which the car is gaining its enormous power over all the rest of our systems, because this is the earliest stage of evolution in all beings. I discovered this by comparing the behaviour of people in different kinds of modes with

the studies made by Karl von Frisch, who has analysed the language of bees. Bees and humans behave in a similar manner; by discovering this homology and using it to go back to the cause of the behaviours' similarities in these two different systems, I discovered the energy level where cars change human and social behaviour.

This is very interesting, I have never heard of a theory like this.

This is because normally the disciplines dealing with transport systems know neither the evolutionary epistemology nor the methods of how to deal with these systems. I was lucky to have friends like Nobel laureate Konrad Lorenz, who was working in this field. Because we now know of the physical connection between men and the car, we can solve the problem, in the only satisfactory way: by putting physical barriers between people and cars. This means very simply that we shouldn't park close to our activities: the parking place should be at least as far away as the next public transport stop. Then the people have a chance of choice; the current system, where we can do whatever we want, is not effective at all.

Since the establishment currently thrives on cars and the automobile industries are very powerful and invest billions in advertising, how can there be such a change in land use or promotion of public transportation?

Changes in physical structure are happening already. For example, I was able to introduce in Vienna an extended pedestrian area in the city centre; my plan was made in 1968, and in 1972 it was open and many people expected that the city centre would die – it was already close to dying before. Now the

city centre is the most attractive part of the city. We have a booming economy there and the richest people living in it. And it has the lowest degree of motorisation. So, what happens is that the leading people have no cars anymore, because they don't need them. Of course lots of people are still dependent on the car and are influenced by advertising, but I think this is a basic change of our society. And if you change the structure, then the people recognise that it is nice to live without a car.

"My main endeavour is to clean us from the power of the car virus"

If the core of the problem is this disharmonious relation between how much energy we exert to drive and how much the car gives back in return due to fossil fuels, do you think that high energy prices will automatically fix it?

High energy prices will not solve this problem: they will actually create a lot of social problems for the majority of the population – rich people are always able to buy this kind of fossil energy. This is a terrible future for most people, who don't even realise how endangered their everyday life will be if society is not prepared in time. Also huge parts of the economy will run into serious problems; this is foreseeable.

The western economic system is currently undergoing a major credit crisis, with many implications. Huge car companies, like General Motors, are struggling financially. Do you think this could lead to some positive changes in the years to come?

Well, if you don't die from something and if you're not stupid, then you're always better off afterwards. This applies also for society. People haven't heard what we've been telling them, and not only me: colleagues from the Club of Rome – in which I'm also a member – and we from the Club of Vienna have been telling society for decades what is now happening, not only in terms of the fossil fuel situation, but also concerning the financial situation. We have a saying in German that translates as "if you don't understand it, you'll

The Walkmobile

Invented in the 70s as a smart way to address the issue of public space usage, the walkmobile (*gehzeug* in German) is a simple frame made from light wood which, when worn, occupies the same amount of space as the average car.

It exposes that hidden behind the metal and glass of a car is a human being – while it is a direct criticism on how our system allocates so much land for just one person.

Several actions have been organised featuring walkmobiles, with people parking and walking on the roads. Here Professor Dr. Hermann Knoflach demonstrates the walkmobile in a busy Viennese street.



feel it afterwards" – this is exactly what is happening now.

The car is a private thing, while the streets are public. I'm wondering whether the root of the problem is that people in the western world function very much out of self-interest rather than out of common interest.

You are absolutely right. This kind of individualism is based on a misunderstanding of all professions dealing with the transport system, because a car, an individual vehicle, is only useful and has some value if society is supporting the whole system. As soon as society doesn't take care of roads, of safety, security and lots of other issues, a car is much more of a burden. Many people think "I'm buying my car and I have all the freedom I want". This is the kind of wrong ideology of the last century, because cars offered a kind of freedom but everybody who has their car recognises suddenly "ok, my freedom is very much restricted by the oil companies and the car manufacturers", because people are essentially captured in their cars. This is not widely recognised because, as you said before, the advertisements are promising wonderful things which, if you rationally think about, are nothing else than lies.

"If you give up your upright position, you give up all your social and human culture"

Do you think that the European Union directives on advertising could change that?

No, the European Union has no idea about the real system behaviour and they are very much under the control of big corporations. I was for many years in the advisory committee for sustainable transport and I've recognised how strong the influence of car manufacturers is. I think the EU is much too much based on outdated experts; they are still in the mainstream, where no solution for the future can be found. There are a lot of attempts, promises, goals etc. but there is not enough knowledge about how to really realise the best practice. It's like walking in the fog with blind people.

If the automobile and oil companies have such a strong political, economic and cultural influence, how can we compete with them?

This is a very simple question for me, because I remember when, about 30 years ago, I was in several conferences in which the leading car manufacturers were laughing at my crazy ideas. Today I am in many international conferences where no car manufacturer is brave enough to join me. So, they're hiding already behind the curtain. This shows exactly that their power, even if it looks very strong at the moment, is reaching an end. Their final thing is that they are trying to develop cryptic things like those hybrid cars, electric cars etc. which is no way for solving the problem in the long-term. I think they are totally in a defensive situation at the moment, although they are still very successful.

I don't feel things are hopeless. I would say that more or less all my planning – and real planning, which has changed the behaviour of people in cities – during the last 40 years was totally hopeless when I started. When I started, the idea of pedestrianisation in Vienna was totally utopian. My recommendation to introduce cycling in Vienna was totally crazy – they laughed for eight years about it. If you look to Vienna, we invented the city bike, which is now a big success in Paris too, and we have a strong cycling community today. And if you look back to when I recommended absolute priority for public transport in Vienna and extended sidewalks, everybody thought in the 70s – and you can see this if you look at the newspapers of the time – "Knoflachner is totally crazy!" This is today a normal situation because either I have done it or my students are doing it, because they know how to work in a responsible way in the traffic engineering field. And they are doing it. If you have some ethics in your work, you cannot do tricky and dirty things.

Transportation is so extremely important in influencing our lives, however people simply don't realise that. Why?

First of all, everything has been provided for this behaviour. The laws, the priorities, the financial support, free space to park your car in different places. So we steal from the next generations, we steal from nature, we steal

from everywhere and the value system in our society is not human-oriented; it is industry-oriented, especially in this field. So, this is the mainstream at the moment, but it will change, whether we like it or not, because fossil energy will not be affordable in the future.

You have vast experience in the field and you've seen its transformation for 40 years now. Would you endeavour to make an educated guess at where things will go in the future?

Oh, this varies! I've introduced a total change in a small village in Northern Italy, which I didn't believe would happen within the next 10 years, within six months. On the other hand I have made planning which was at least as good as this one, 30 years ago, and nothing has happened in a particular city. They have invited other planners and they still have the same problems they did 10 years ago.

What is needed to make a change is good politicians, good administrations, good media and good experts. And today you have very few good experts because they are still educated in the wrong way and they are still teaching in the wrong way. You have a public that is rather well aware, at least a part of it; which has a much better feeling and much better knowledge about system behaviour than old transport experts. Then you have the politicians and the EU Commission which is not totally controlled but influenced by the big companies, and this is the problem of the moment. And as long as the system is not changing, the whole will not change. But it is undergoing change already, because on the community level a lot of things are happening which nobody would have imagined 30 years ago. I was just talking to professor Dennis Meadows, who wrote *Limits to Growth* and also made an updated version of this world-changing book from the Club of Rome, about his forecast and I can only repeat what he said: "The variety of the different futures is big, but there is one certain thing: that we will not be able to waste energy anymore in such amounts as we have in the last 150 years."

For more information about the walkmobile please visit www.fairkehr.net (German only)





Whirl and twirl and dance and spin,
Red and Black and wheels and grin...

© David Niddrie www.davidniddrie.com

The B:C:Clettes

Dancing Towards a Revolution

By Ron Richings

Who are these striking women in red and black, and why are they dancing around with wheels and bikes? They are the B:C:Clettes. The name is both from the French Biciclettes and a reference to where they come from – BC, as in British Columbia, Canada. Formed about four years ago, the founding members saw a way to combine their personal values with bicycles, the fun of performance, and a physical need to move and dance.

The Clettes perform salsa, hip-hop, modern and Vegas-style numbers. Bike love, bike theft, helmet safety, aggressive drivers and

more are their subjects. Bike parts, theatre, spoken word and comedy mix with hot dance moves set to funky music, with inventive choreography, red and black outfits and lots of 'attitude'.

Proudly Amateur

The moves, the choreography, are their own. Some groups might bring in a 'professional' or two, but that wouldn't be as authentic. And part of their example and message is that you don't need to be an 'expert' to do this – with hard work and collective strength you can create and perform with the resources available from yourself and your group.

They perform in their own time and without pay – the money they receive just helps to cover their expenses.

Collective Operation

Operating in line with their principles, the Clettes make decisions as a collective, with established processes for various types of issues. Anyone familiar with collective decision-making will know that this approach fits the paraphrase, "when it is good, it is very very good, and when it is bad, it is horrid." Not without emotion or the occasional snit or tears, but it is a testament to those involved that they have made it work well for several years.



The Clette-a-Festo

The B:C:Clettes are a **Biker Collective, Creating Love, Equality, and Toughness Through Engaging Spectacle!**

We will not be defined by words alone; instead you will find us perpetually in motion, taking back the streets for revolutionary use as bicycle ways and dance floors. We're revolutionary, yes, like our wheels.

Hot, tough, and shiny – like the sexy steeds we tame and ride. Pedal, pump, coast and fly: we ride in all weather. Swing, shimmy, strut, and jive: we dance in all weather. We weather all storms as a collective, together.

We are artists, mechanics, scientists, students, designers, teachers, and writers, and baristas; jokers, inventors, leaders, neighbours, family,

friends, and lovers, and sistas. This is a lifestyle of agility, sustainability, of respecting all ability.

Our bodies don't end where our bikes begin. We're beauty, we're pride; we dance hard, roll fast, and tread lightly, loving life. We take risks; we're a little different. We are a spectacle, a show, a delight. We are that giddy feeling you get riding pedal-powered for the first time: exhilarated with newfound fun, you can't wait to share your amazing secret with the world. We want to ride and dance and share our secret with you.

And one last thing: we won't technically be able to be part of your dance-dance-party revolution, if there's no bike parking available. So get on it!



No Bimbos

There aren't any bimbos or airheads among the group. Any preconception of dancers as not too bright is way off the mark for these performers. As individuals they are all smart, interesting women.

Perfect? Of course not. A few are considerable 'hams', but this just livens up the performances. Others are more restrained and almost shy. Emotional? Yes, like in any group, some members seem a bit highly strung, others much more mellow. But from this diversity they derive their collective strength.

Sexy? Sure. How could they not be? But in a helmet and toe clips kind of way. The sexuality that comes from strong bodies in rhythmic motion.

The key to their performances is not 'high art', it is making a bond with members of the community that they happen to be in. It is street theatre with a biking and sustainability message. Their focus isn't all about bikes – although bike dancing is the medium that they use. Supporting and inspiring any actions and organisations that do their bit to encourage living a lighter, more sustainable lifestyle is their aim.

And the Kids

When kids watch, and sometimes become part of the performance, you can see how they become involved and affected by the Clettes and what they do. Particularly in smaller communities where they have never seen anything remotely like this. And of course the feedback inspires the dancers to be better and better.

Tours

In addition to many local Vancouver performances, the last year or so has taken the B:C:Clettes to Portland, Oregon several times, to San Francisco, Los Angeles and other Californian towns. Performing to appreciative crowds along the way.

This June marked a tour of Vancouver Island BC – with a difference. The Clettes (and some friends), their food, camping equipment, props, clothing, sound equipment, etc. travelled by bicycle (and a few trailers) 260 km over seven days to give several up close and



© Ron Richings

personal community performances. On the streets of Ladysmith, a folk-fest in Duncan, a weekend market in Ganges (on Salt Spring Island), a conference in Metchosin and at a bandshell in Victoria, they found crowds eager to embrace their message of bicycles and sustainability – and watch and join in their shows, of course. This was the Wheely Fun Bike Tour 2008.

For many of the Clettes this was their first real exposure to loaded bicycle touring – a considerable change from their normal urban biking. The route was not flat – on the contrary much of it was quite hilly. Despite heat, sweat and the pain that new touring cyclists know well, everyone stuck with it. These women are not wimps.

To Come?

What is in store for the future? More and better of what they already do, as well as more touring – to spread their message as broadly as possible. Cities in the United States and Canada probably need their energy, example and message most, but a European tour is a dream that many hope for. However, sponsorship would be needed for such an

expensive trip. And there is a lingering question of how they would be received where bicycles and bicycle culture are already so well accepted. Would anyone in Amsterdam or Copenhagen, for instance, be interested or care? Questions that would certainly be interesting to see answered.

So these are the Clettes: a group of committed women, doing their bit collectively to encourage cycling, living lightly and sustainably. Demonstrating by example for girls that they can be assertive, athletic, and do some good in the world – that there is more to life than Barbie dolls. And in doing this they empower, express, and develop themselves. They win, the people who they perform for and with win, and the communities that they visit benefit. It doesn't get much better than that.

They serve as an inspiration: showing how bikes and dancing together can help spur progressive, perhaps revolutionary change. And as Emma Goldman is famously quoted as saying, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." 🍷

For more information about the B:C:Clettes, please visit www.bcclettes.com.



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Studies & Reports

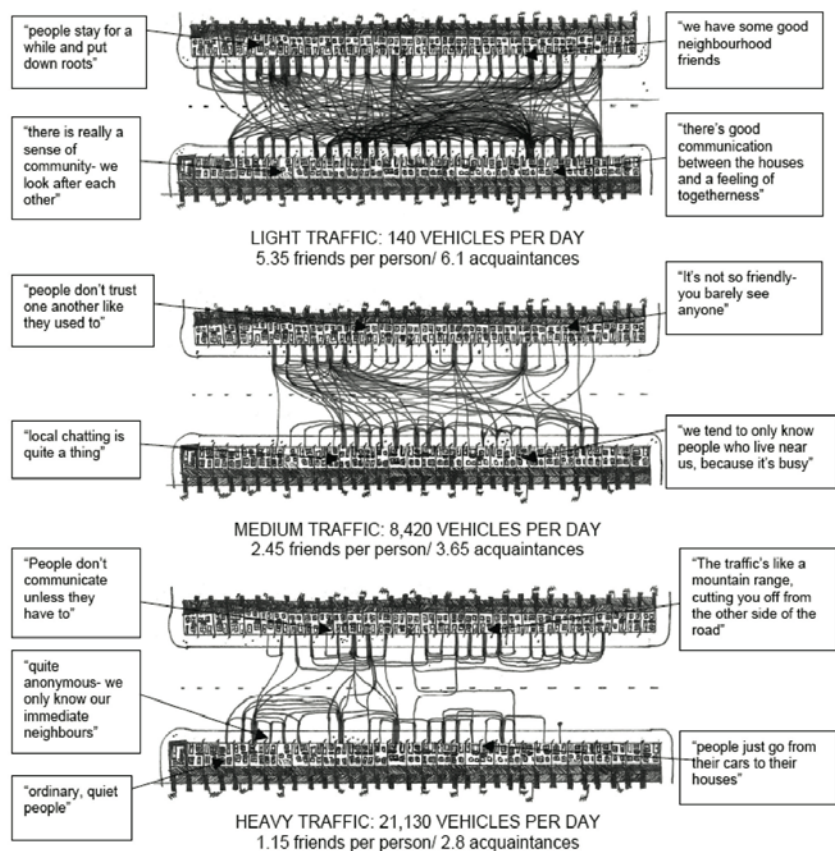
Heavy Traffic Kills Friendships

People living in streets violated by heavy traffic have as much as 75% less friends than people inhabiting similar streets with less traffic. This striking discovery, from a study conducted by the University of West Anglia, indicates the heavy blow inflicted in communities worldwide by cars. The study's title speaks for itself: "Driven to Excess".

In one of the streets of North Bristol where the study took place over 20,000 cars drive by people's homes each day, cutting off individuals from one another and keeping kids away from the dangerous place the road has become. It's not only playing that's forbidden in roads with heavy traffic; it's hard even to have a healthy discussion with someone in an environment filled with noise and poisons. And when people can't sleep well due to the noise, it's no wonder that they wake up grumpy and with little mood to exchange a jolly "good morning".

Since our living space is becoming evermore polluted and infringed upon, and unsafe streets are the norm in the world's bustling megacities, is it any wonder that people are looking for social connectedness in the safety and comfort of their homes and via the Internet?

To download the full study visit tinyurl.com/67k72c. Or write to: Joshua Hart, c/o Streets Alive Ltd., 86 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB, UK.



The web of community interaction on three Bristol streets, with lines showing friendships and acquaintances, and related quotes from the residents. © Joshua Hart

World News

No Phase-In For Car CO₂ Emissions

The EU Environment Committee took a bold step late September by deciding to stand firm against the car lobby's fervent attempts to water down the agreement on the CO₂ emissions of new vehicles. While the proposal drawn by Guido Sacconi was favourably inclined towards car manufacturers, the Environment Committee overwhelmingly rejected the proposal of going with business-as-usual until 2015. Not only that, but the outrageous arguments used by car manufacturers seemed to have a boomerang effect. So, the Committee not only proposed an average of 120g of CO₂ per kilometre by 2012, but also for heavy cars, while a new long-term target of 95g CO₂/km was drawn for 2020 – current levels of emissions are 160g CO₂/km. The Committee also rejected the notion of fixing at €50 the “excess emissions premiums” manufacturers will have to pay for each gram of carbon dioxide over the target. Instead it proposed to increase the fine from €20 in 2012 to €95 from 2015 onwards.

Environmentalists around Europe hailed this (quite unexpected) victory, whereas the car lobby seems only to grow more resolved. While the issues still remain on the legislative table, nothing is ensured yet. *Carbusters* urges its European readers to join the growing momentum of letters and e-mails to MEPs that were pivotal in changing the Environment Committee's attitude in the first place.

Tata Nano Factory Relocates

Following severe protests from farmers, Tata Motors was forced to “pack up” its new factory for the Tata Nano in West Bengal and make a hurried exit. Ten thousand farmers of the Singur region were promised compensation for their land early January, when Tata was invited to build the factory for the “People's Car”. However, more than 2,000 farmers declined and demanded to have their land back, while many complained that the land takeover was illegal and without their consent. Protests ensued, leading to the *de facto* eviction of the company.

The premature evacuation of the plant and its relocation to Gujarat caused Tata to miss its October deadline for the production of the Nano, a compact city car that will cost approximately US\$2,500. A new deadline has been set for December 28, coinciding with the 71st birthday of the company's chairman. However, similar protests in Gujarat could prolong the release date further. The company intends to flood the Indian (and European) market with its cheap and light car.

It remains unclear whether the acquitted land will be returned to the farmers, with the state government insisting that there are no legal provisions to direct this eventuality.



Protesters burnt an effigy of the Tata Nano in January

Wanna cut your car use? ..just call anna



Dear Anna

Food is a major pleasure in life. I want to eat well and also cut the food miles and climate change emissions associated with my diet. What can you suggest?

Yours
Foody

Dear Foody

Going to buy a weekly food shop is one reason people justify car ownership – for carrying loads. But, if it's the only reason, massive savings can be made by walking there and taking a taxi back, and/or by using home delivery services. Besides, a weekly shop is a car-based concept. Carfree people shop regularly – perhaps every other day, and locally.

The best places to get food are allotment sales, local farms, farmers' markets, organic box schemes and community run shops; or barter amongst friends with home-grown produce. Also, prepare food yourself rather than buying processed items; and avoid processed meat or ready meals. The worst places to shop are huge supermarkets – due to over-packaging and long distance supply chains. Read labels regarding place of origin and eat seasonally abundant foods.

Walk or cycle to the shop, or go by public transport, and choose the nearest outlet. Take reusable carrying bags (ideally a backpack or a shopping trolley). Home delivery saves overall miles travelled if people would otherwise have driven, as a van does a round trip of customers. If you do have to drive, then car-share. As to lunches at work: packing sandwiches is greener than eating in the canteen or going out for food.

Of all of our spending, food has the greatest climate change impact. Fortunately it's an area about which readers of this magazine have considerable personal choice. Someone living solely on fruit and vegetables grown in their own allotment creates negligible

food miles or emissions. We know that due to global agro-business, food travels incredible distances to dinner tables – they are moveable feasts! On average, every calorie of food nowadays requires 10 calories of energy, because so much of its production, storage and transport uses fossil energy – totally unsustainable. Think also about quantities of water needed for certain foods (water footprint) and kitchen appliances (appliance footprint) plus cooking energy costs.

I'm giving tips to cut not just travelling distance, but the total impact on the climate of energy in agriculture, fertilisers, food transport, processing, storage, shops and catering, plus methane and nitrous oxide from animals, animal wastes and agricultural soil.

Much of this is from George Marshall's book *Carbon Detox*, in which he introduces the "carbo" – a kilo of carbon dioxide equivalent. For instance, methane, with 23 times the climate impact of carbon dioxide, is 23 carbos.

To work out your own yearly food carbo score: if you are an average person in the UK with 38% animal based nutrition, start with 2,000 carbos. Adjust up or down as necessary e.g. a 50% animal based diet is 2,250 and a light meat diet is 1,750.

1) Eat organic. Nitrous oxides produced when nitrogen-based fertilisers break down have 310 times the global warming effect of carbon dioxide. This accounts for 450 carbos. So halve your score for the relevant proportion of food that is organic.

2) Eat much less meat – provided you don't buy vegetarian food that is flown in out of season or highly processed. This saves 500 carbos or 1,000 for vegans. Note that scores increase by 40 if you buy airfreight fish or vegetables once every month.

3) Avoid lamb and beef, which have four times the carbos of pork and eight times that

of chicken – due to methane. A cow produces 120kg of methane, the equivalent of driving a car 10,000 kilometres (6,200 miles), a year. Deduct 200.

4) Avoid processed or imported food. Deduct 400 carbos.

5) If you eat all leftovers and never throw away edible food deduct 10%.

6) Compost all of your food waste. Deduct 200 carbos.

7) Eat out and have takeaways less. Deduct 100 carbos.

Road transportation of food accounts for 240 carbos each, on average, and airfreight is 30 carbos, but could be far higher for some people.

With regard to cooking and preparation, either eat more raw food or chop into small pieces before cooking. Quick frying takes less fuel than oven cooking. Cook in quantity and invite neighbours to share meals. Compost your waste and recycle packages. Also use fridges/freezers with an efficient energy rating.

We can all cut our food's carbon footprint and eat fresher. Growing more ourselves, and reducing carbon embedded in our diet, aids resilience to food shortages due to peak oil. Totnes, a Transition Town, has planted many walnut trees as a future crop. They've also got a garden swap scheme. This is where people with land who can't or don't want to grow food on it, can lend it to others who do. Now I'm off to my shared allotment for blackberries.

Anna Semlyen

Author of *Cutting Your Car Use* (www.cuttingyourcaruse.co.uk) Sales at over 100,000. If you would like to write a version for your country contact John Elford at Green Books (john@greenbooks.co.uk)



© Andy Singer

No Exit

Interview with Andy Singer

By Sam Fleet

Andy Singer has been drawing and publishing cartoons and illustrations since 1991, and has been a regular contributor to Carbusters for 10 years. His work appears in small US alternative weekly newspapers and occasionally in more mainstream venues, alongside regular appearances in the French paper La Décroissance. His work covers a broad range of topics, although he has a special interest in carfree living, bicycles and transportation issues. We talked to him about his work and career on the eve of the fourth reprint of his popular book CARtoons.

You've been contributing to *Carbusters* for 10 years, and critiquing car culture since 1992. How do you feel your art has evolved over this time?

I've gradually read and learned more about the history of highways and automobiles, and more about bicycles, transit, urban planning and transportation politics. Some of this I've learned from reading books like *Asphalt Nation*, *The Power Broker*, *Getting There*, *For the Love of the Automobile*, *Energy and Equity* etc., and some of it I've learned by cycling, walking, transit riding and direct participation in a couple of political battles between highways and local communities. Hopefully, some of this knowledge and experience has found its way into my art.

Do you think car culture has evolved over this time?

Not really. If anything, I've seen it devolve. The romance and love affair with the car has diminished considerably in America, particularly with rising oil prices. As commutes grow longer, people enjoy driving less and they definitely don't enjoy paying more for gas. I think you see this in the form of record increases in US transit rider-ship and bicycling, especially in the last year or two. I see less enthusiasm for car shows and new cars. The 1980s and 90s were the peak of car culture in America. You had drive-thru everything – banks, fast food, movies, funerals,

weddings, churches, drive-by shootings, you name it. If it could be done, someone in America had figured out how to do it in a car. Plus the 1980s and 90s were boom years for suburban sprawl and the zenith of hideous suburban housing, strip malls and massive eyecore developments. You had the absurdly sized exurban "Trophy homes" with 25 rooms, four-car garages and multiple massive bathrooms, with three sinks and a Jacuzzi in each one... all on an acre or more of land. Now, with gas prices at record highs and the huge decline in home values, exurban housing has lost a ton of value and appeal. It's impossible for people to sell some of these homes (at any price) and homebuilders have stopped building them. Urban foreclosures grab a lot of the headlines but suburbia and exurbia have seen the biggest decline in home values and even higher per-capita rates of foreclosure.

As gas prices rise, I think you'll see more Americans moving back to cities and a further decline in driving, cars and car culture.

"If it could be done, someone in America had figured out how to do it in a car"

CARtoons is about to go for its fourth print. To what do you attribute its popularity?

Well, the printings are very small. The first and second printing were only 2,000 copies each. The third printing was just 1,000. There've been tiny editions in a couple of other languages but it's hardly a 'bestseller'. If you guys could get me an appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show maybe it would really

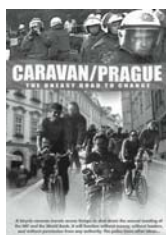
take off! We just have to convince Oprah to live carfree and give away bicycles on her show (instead of cars).

What's your opinion on the effectiveness of cartoons as a medium for spreading the carfree message?

I think they are a good low-budget medium for disseminating ideas. For very little money you can print up a bunch of them and hand them to other cyclists, put them under windshield wipers, put them on bus ad-racks, publish them in newspapers, use them in PowerPoint presentations or as learning aids in classrooms. Or you can just post or send them across the Internet. I like how cartoons combine words and images into a visual shorthand that can quickly communicate complex ideas. You can show people something in a single panel cartoon that might take you 10 minutes of talking or 10 pages of writing to explain. Wordless cartoons can cross barriers in language and communicate with people in other countries or cultures. For this reason, our society uses cartoons for all sorts of things – airplane safety cards (showing exits and evacuation procedures), diagrams on how to aid choking victims in restaurants, religious treatises, AIDS awareness campaigns, instruction manuals, etc. The CIA even got caught using comic books to train the Nicaraguan Contras and the Afghan Mujahideen. So comics are definitely effective at communicating and disseminating messages... though it helps to have the resources to widely print and disseminate them.

How about the effectiveness of your cartoons?

I'm too close to them to be able to objectively judge their effectiveness. I get a lot of requests from people to reproduce my images in their books or classroom presentations, or



CARAVAN/PRAGUE
DVD, 2007, 76 minutes.
Caravanprague.com

Reviewed in *Carbusters* 31, now part of our Resource Centre.
See page 28.

even from engineers and politicians giving presentations on transportation issues. Also people pay me to reproduce cartoons in newspapers or draw commissioned illustrations. So at least a few people think they're effective for communicating things. I hope they're right.

Often the interpretation of a cartoon's message is dramatically different from the intended one. What are your thoughts on this?

Alternative transportation cartoons are a small percentage of what I draw and generally these don't get misinterpreted. I've drawn some political cartoons, however, that

have been hugely misinterpreted, particularly cartoons about Israeli politics. In the US, if you criticise Israeli policy in cartoons (or any other medium), people freak out on you and call you "Anti-Semitic", even if you're Jewish.

I've also had satirical cartoons misinterpreted by people who think I'm being serious. I once did a cartoon making fun of childhood myths – that "if you cross your eyes they'll stay that way", or "Evel Knievel broke every bone in his body." This was stuff that kids would say on the schoolyard when we were little. The title of the cartoon was "63% of all facts are made up." One of the frames showed a kid saying, "Did you hear about the woman who put her poodle in the microwave?"

Some angry reader wrote to the newspaper complaining that I was advocating putting dogs in microwaves!

From where do you draw your inspiration?

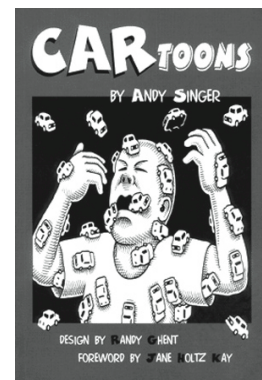
I draw inspiration from everyday life. Cartoons and drawing have just become the way I digest the world around me. I do cartoons about everything – transportation, politics, philosophy, art, love, business, relationships, sleeping, not sleeping, sex, drugs, food, almost anything you can think of. Some people take photographs or keep journals of their day-to-day life. I draw cartoons.

Do you think you'll ever run out of material?

Nah. All you have to do is step out of your apartment in the morning or open a newspaper. The world is completely insane.

Any future projects on the horizon?

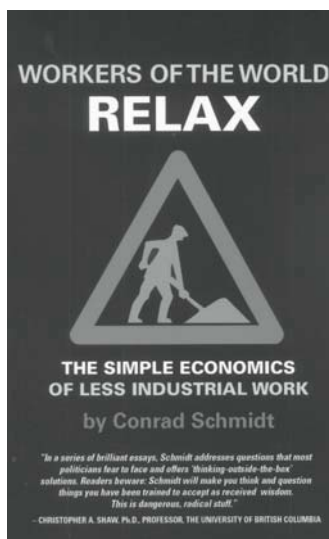
I want to do a graphic novel about art, and finish a children's story that I've got pencilled but haven't inked or coloured. I also have a transportation art-book idea based on a slide talk that I give called "Transportation Politics". It needs some more research into the relationship between transportation agency lobbying and US transportation policy, and it needs some demographic research into suburban versus urban voting patterns. I recently applied for a research fellowship at Harvard but I didn't get it. Because the book would require a lot of colour images, it would be too expensive to self-publish. So I may just put it on the Internet if I ever finish it.



CARtoons

By Andy Singer

Carbusters Press, 2001, 100pp,
ISBN 80-238-7020-3



Workers of the World, Relax

The Simple Economics of Less Industrial Work

By Conrad Schmidt

WLP Publishing, 2006, 143pp.

ISBN 0-9739772-0-5

With the financial crisis causing global panic, and following on from last issue's interview with Conrad Schmidt, we offer a long overdue review of Schmidt's alternative to the current system of production and consumption.

By Theo Haris

"Why in heaven's name are we working so hard to destroy the planet and make ourselves miserable at the same time?" This is the fundamental question addressed by Conrad Schmidt in his little wonder *Workers of the World, Relax*. A question that indeed lies at the core of modern industrial society and touches most of its aspects. Moreover, it is deceiving: albeit simple, it hides a labyrinth of complexities. But Schmidt seems to possess Ariadne's thread. He manages to provide a comprehensive political, economic and social framework, based on a sound reading of history and remarkable research. And all that in only 143 pages of simple reading. Impressive.

From the Apartheid to Eisenhower and from Easter Island to Jevons Paradox, Schmidt moves in a relaxed pace that fits the subject. The advice offered in order to escape the vicious cycle of unhappiness and environmental degradation is equally simple: decrease production rather than increase consump-

tion. Yet, still a recipe that would bring strong repercussions in the world's economic, social and environmental situation – with Schmidt highlighting those throughout.

Cars of course have an 'honourary' position as "the most ominous inventions of the 20th century". In just a few pages, Schmidt provides an all-embracing overview that is a must for people who are not familiar with the subject.

This book may not offer detailed tactical solutions – there's still potential for a *magnum opus*, but what it does offer is an intriguing read and a vast array of research for those who wish to delve more deeply. It is an inspired piece, which steers clear of any doomsday characterisation. Its message is essentially happy: by working less, we would have more democracy, less unemployment, a better environment, quality food and healthy societies (of course with less cars). Sounds utopian? Read the book and find out how.

Non-fiction

Carfree Cities

J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages
US\$35, EUR 24, £18, or CZK 620

An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, Carfree Cities outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life.

Car Sick

Lynn Sloman, 2006, 192 pages
US\$29, EUR 20, £15, or CZK 520

"Cars cause environmental destruction, provoke stress and tear the heart out of communities. Car Sick provides a page-turning account of how we got into this mess, and more importantly, charts an attractive way out." - T. Juniper, Friends of the Earth

Critical Mass

Bicycling's Defiant Celebration
Chris Carlsson, editor, 2002, 256 pages
US\$25, EUR 16, £12, or CZK 410

An irreverent collection of inkworthy social critique and optimistic celebration. Forty-eight contributors document, define and drive home the beauty of a quiet ride.

Cutting Your Car Use (UK Version)

Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!
Anna Semlyen, 2007, 96 pages
US\$12, EUR 8, £6, or CZK 210

Britain's first ever personal traffic reduction guide. Packed with easy-to-follow, best practice advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give up the car completely. New updated colour edition.

Divorce Your Car!

Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages
US\$20, EUR 14, £10, or CZK 360

Divorce Your Car! speaks to individuals, encouraging readers to change their own driving behaviour without waiting for broader social change, stressing that individual action can drive social change.

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Should you prefer to pay by bank transfer, please contact us.

Earth First! Direct Action Manual

DAM Collective, 1998, 152 pages
US\$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180

End of the Road

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages
US\$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180

There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport...

Life Between Buildings

Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages
US\$40, EUR 27, £20, or CZK 720

First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. Life Between Buildings is the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

Public Spaces - Public Life

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 1996, 96 pages
US\$49, EUR 33, £25, or CZK 870

Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished.

Sustainable Mobility Guide for Municipalities

Justin Hyatt, 2006, 52 pages
US\$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180

The Sustainable Mobility Guide provides a full spectrum of themes related to transportation, urban design, mobility management and more. It is aimed at decision makers as well as NGO's working in the field of transport and urban planning, or anyone else interested in a broad survey of urban mobility issues. Also contains a section highlighting relevant websites and organisations.

Fiction/Kids

The Age of the Bicycle

Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages
US\$15, EUR 10, £8, or CZK 270

"What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour..."

Alice in Underland

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999
US\$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180

A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairytale, which takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America.

Family Mouse Behind the Wheel

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages, hardcover
US\$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180

Colourful illustrated book that teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences...

The Little Driver [Special Offer!]

Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages
US\$7, EUR 4.5, £3.5, or CZK 105

A children's book for young and old, The Little Driver takes a fresh look at our obsession with cars through the eyes of a boy still young enough to take nothing for granted.

Carbusters Press

Bulk Discount: Ten or more CARtoons and/or Roadkill Bill books, any combination, for half price.

CARtoons

Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages, optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics

Book: US\$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180

CD-ROM: US\$5, EUR 3.50, £2.50, or CZK 90

A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's infamous graphics.

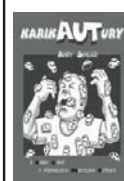
Roadkill Bill [Special Offer!]

Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages

US\$7, EUR 4.5, £3.5, or CZK 105

It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. In Roadkill Bill, the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome cartoons are collected together for the first and only time. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok.

karikAUTury, GÉPregény, karikAUTúry, and AUTOkomiks



CARtoons has been published in Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish. The books are part of the Visegrad Resource Centre project. If you are interested in copies contact <Chris@worldcarfree.net>.

DVD

Caravan/Prague

2007, 76 min., DVD, US\$20, EUR 13, CZK 320

A bicycle caravan travels across Europe to shut down the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank. It will function without money, without leaders, and without permission from any authority. The police have other ideas... Included is the short film Quebec: At the Wall.



Source*

2005, 77 min., DVD, region-free
PAL (plays on all PCs) - US\$25,
EUR 17, £13, or CZK 450

The tale of the Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline is a tale of corruption, greed and Western money flowing into the oil-soaked shores of the Caspian Sea. This documentary takes you to the source.

CARBUSTERS #36 | NOV 2008 - FEB 2009

Still We Ride!

In Tandem Productions, 2005, 37 min., DVD
US\$20, EUR 14, £10, or CZK 360

This action-packed documentary is a glimpse into the shocking showdown between the monthly Critical Mass bike ride and New York City police in the months after the Republican National Convention in August 2004.

Stickers

"One Less Car" Bike Stickers

Ten stickers: US\$4.5, EUR 3, £2, or CZK 70

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T-Shirts

"No Cars"

US\$12, EUR 8, £6, or CZK 210

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